This is the famous portrait found in Corpus Christi College, Cambridge University, believed to be that of Christopher Marlowe. Note the inscription on the portrait: ANO DNI AETATIS SVAE 21 1585. Marlowe would have been 21 in 1585. Also, Marlowe's motto in the portrait, QUOD ME NUTRIT ME DESTRUIT, can be found in Shakespeare's Sonnet 73 and elsewhere in the plays (Parker Library, Corpus Christi College, Cambridge University).

The Marlowe-Shakespeare Connection

A New Study of the Authorship Question

SAMUEL L. BLUMENFELD

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Let fame, that all hunt after in their lives,
Live registered upon our brazen tombs,
And then grace us in the disgrace of death;
When, spite of cormorant devouring Time,
The endeavor of this present breath may buy
That honor which shall bate his scythe's keen edge,
And make us heirs of all eternity.

Love's Labour's Lost

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Preface

This book was written to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the author of the poems and plays attributed to William Shakespeare was actually Christopher Marlowe, the poetic genius who was supposed to have been killed in 1593. It seemed to this writer that if, indeed, Marlowe was the towering genius who wrote the thirty-six plays in the First Folio, the readers of those plays would not only want to know of the man who wrote them but would also want to honor him as the greatest literary genius in all of history.

Harold C. Goddard wrote in *The Meaning of Shakespeare*: "We must know Shakespeare before we know what he wrote precisely in order to be capable of finding out more nearly what he did write." In other words, a writer's biography may be as important as the works he authored.

It took this writer seven years of daily, arduous research to produce a chronological account of what must be considered the most extraordinary biography in the annals of literature. That it includes some speculation goes without saying. The many biographies of Shakespeare, based on no documentary evidence that he was a writer, are more works of fiction than historical fact.

It was Calvin Hoffman who, in 1955, first advanced the theory that Christopher Marlowe did not die in 1593 as reported, but underwent a faked death to protect him from Archbishop Whitgift's inquisition. As editor of the Universal Library at Grosset & Dunlap, I reprinted Hoffman's book, *The Murder of the Man Who Was Shakespeare*, in a paperback edition. It was the reading of that book that turned me into a Marlovian.

Since then, I entertained the idea of carrying forth where Hoffman left off. Eight years ago I felt ready to take on the task. Writing this book has been an exhilarating experience, and I hope that the reader will have an exhilarating experience reading it.

While the book contains some original conjectures of my own, I have relied almost entirely on the mountain of books written about Marlowe, Shakespeare, and the Elizabethan era. My work consisted mainly of weaving a tapestry from the many strands of biographical information I found hidden and buried in the

published literature. And I continue to find new interesting bits and pieces of information that add to what I have compiled. In other words, this is a labor that has no end.

I would like to pay tribute to all of those scholars and biographers who have paved the way for this writer. Many of them, such as Stanley Wells, A.L. Rowse, Tucker Brooke, Kenneth Muir, and others in their league, have spent most of their professional lives living and breathing Shakespeare. More recent biographers of Marlowe — Kuriyama, Nicholl, Riggs, Honan, Kendall — have added substantially to what we know about the poet-playwright. But none of them ventured forth beyond the questionable events of May 1593.

I am especially indebted not only to the work of Calvin Hoffman, but also to the work of that intrepid biographer of Marlowe, A.D. Wraight, whose book, *In Search of Christopher Marlowe*, published in 1965, provides the best pictorial biography of the Canterbury poet published to date. My great sorrow is that she died before I had a chance to meet her.

I wish also to acknowledge the help and encouragement I have received from John Baker, America's foremost Marlovian. John lives in Centralia, Washington, and has the liveliest Marlovian website on the Internet. His singular devotion to the Marlowe theory is a rare example of a selfless pursuit of truth for its own sake. His constant compilation of newly uncovered facts is a daily reminder that what we know is only a small part of what can be known.

I also found Michael Rubbo's beautiful and evocative film, *Much Ado About Something*, an encouraging event in the endeavor to bring the authorship question to the public. Michael, a gifted Australian cinematographer, was also inspired by Calvin Hoffman's work and spent five years making this extraordinary film. It is my hope that this book will expand the public's interest in this fascinating and absorbing story.

I am also indebted to my good friend Carlo T. DiNota of the English Department of Berkeley Preparatory School in Tampa, Florida, who was the first to read the manuscript as a work in progress. At that time he was teaching English literature at the Maimonides School in Brookline, Massachusetts, and the reaction of his very bright students to my work was so positive that I was greatly encouraged to complete the book.

My gratitude must also go to Cathie Brettschneider for obtaining two reports from scholars who commended the project and suggested ways to improve it.

As an octogenarian, I am grateful to all of those who have, in countless ways, enriched my life. I am happy that for the last eight years I have been immersed in the glorious writings of the world's greatest literary genius and the great historical era in which he lived. If this book does little more than add something of value to the world's knowledge of the greatest writer of all time and of his tragic exile, it will have served its purpose.

Prologue

We begin with questions.

Does it matter who wrote the plays and poems attributed to William Shakespeare? Should we care one way or another? What difference does it make, or will make, in our appreciation of the works as literature?

These are questions often asked when the authorship question is brought up. My own belief is that the truth in this case is far better than fiction, and that the truth should be pursued for its own sake, because truth must be the basis of the wisdom we need, not only in the pursuit of our own happiness and well-being but also in establishing justice with the past for the sake of future generations.

There is nothing unreasonable, or illogical, about the premise that the man named William Shakespeare did not and could not write the works attributed to him. Nothing in the documented biographical data gathered about the man in the last 300 years suggests that he was a writer or poet capable of writing the greatest plays in literary history.

To overlook the authorship question, to ignore what it suggests about life in Elizabethan England, is to close one's mind to history. The fact that the writer of these works is considered to be the greatest dramatist of all time is enough to force us to investigate this matter, wherever it may lead. The fact that a virtual library of books has been written on this subject proves that interest in this matter of authorship cannot be dismissed as irrelevant to the works themselves. If what we are considering is a conspiracy of extraordinary scope, then it is reasonable to assume that clues pertaining to that conspiracy will be found in the plays and poems written by the true author.

It should be stated that the purpose of this book is not to disparage William Shakespeare or the legend that has grown up around him. Its purpose is to offer an alternative story that provides logical and rational explanations of what took place during the years when the plays and poems were being written.

The difficulty in trying to establish fact for the historian is the remoteness of the events that took place and the scarcity of hard biographical and docu-

mentary evidence when it comes to William Shakespeare. There were no computers, or tape recorders, or cameras in those days. There was no television, no directories, no daily newspapers with theater reviewers, none of the information-age paraphernalia which we take so much for granted.

In the sixteenth century, printing and publishing were still somewhat primitive. Record keeping was all done by hand and was mainly the function of churches, courts, and government bureaus. Important records were often written in Latin. Copyright laws, as we know them, didn't exist. The Stationers Company tried to regulate publication and was often used as a means of censoring what reached the public. It was common for a play to be published and circulated without an author's name attached. Extensive biographical data about individuals, famous or not, was virtually unobtainable. Rumor and hearsay were the main sources of popular information. Most of what we know today about Shakespeare is the result of years of search in government archives, church and court records, and the harvest has been by all accounts, pretty meager.

For example, there doesn't seem to exist a single page of manuscript written in the hand of Shakespeare that would establish his authorship. All of the manuscripts used in the publication of the First Folio are nowhere to be found. Were they deliberately destroyed by the publishers? Where are the original drafts of the Sonnets? Anyone who could find such a draft would most likely be paid millions of dollars for it at auction.

What is left for historians and biographers to do? They must take whatever hard data exists and simply conjecture what must have happened in between. An imagination can run wild under such circumstances, but a circumspect historian will try to stick to the documented facts and use logic and a strong sense of probability in filling in the missing pieces of the puzzle.

And so we launch into this maze of mysteries because, like Mount Everest, it is there to be explored and finally conquered. Those who have come to love the plays and poems written by this author will want to know who he was so that they can better understand their hidden depths.

1

The Mystery Examined

The long-standing controversy over William Shakespeare's authorship has been with us ever since the English clergyman the Rev. James Wilmot concluded in 1781 that Shakespeare simply did not have the education or experience to have written the works attributed to him. Thinking that the great playwright must have had a substantial library that, after his death, was sold off to the local gentry by his poor, illiterate heirs, Wilmot investigated every bookcase for fifty miles around Stratford and could not find a single volume once belonging to a playwright who had made extensive use of source books for his plays. Wilmot concluded that the man from Stratford was not the man who wrote the works attributed to him. Thus, the question became: who did write the greatest plays in English literature?

Those who have accepted the view that the man known as William Shakespeare actually wrote these works have woven elaborate biographies based on non-existing biographical data. If there is reference in a play that required a knowledge of Latin, they assume that Shakespeare knew Latin. And because in the plays there are accurate descriptions of specific places in Italy, they assume that he must have been to Italy. But there is no evidence that the man William Shakespeare ever traveled to Italy.

Graham Phillips and Martin Keatman summed up the biographical problem in their book, *The Shakespeare Conspiracy* (pp. 1, 6, 13):

> The life of William Shakespeare is shrouded in mystery. There is no record of him receiving an education, buying a book or writing a single letter, and no original manuscript of a Shakespeare play survives. There is no direct record of his conversations, and no one in his home town seems to have known that he was a successful playwright while he was alive. There is not even a contemporary portrait to reveal his true appearance....
>
> Almost *everything* in the orthodox life of William Shakespeare is fictitious....
>
> Any theories concerning how Shakespeare joined the theatre, or how he first began writing, are simply that — theories. The only record of Shakespeare from his marriage at eighteen, until around his thirtieth year, are the births of his children, and his name on a legal document relating to his mother.... This formative period remains a total mystery.

We know that Shakespeare was part owner of a theatre company, an actor, and a shrewd businessman. But was he also a writer? Mark Twain, a serious doubter of Shakespeare's authorship, was particularly disturbed by the total absence of anything related to authorship in Shakespeare's will, written in 1616 shortly before his death. Twain wrote:

> It named in minute detail every item of property he owned in the world — houses, lands, sword, silver-gilt bowl, and so on. It mentioned not a single book. The will mentioned not a play, not a poem, not an unfinished literary work, and not a scrap of manuscript of any kind. Books were much more precious than swords and silver-gilt bowls, and when a departing person owned one he gave it a high place in his will.

Not even Shakespeare's son-in-law, John Hall, a noted physician and author of a medical book in Latin, knew that his wife's father was a writer of any kind. Hall and his wife Susanna were the chief beneficiaries of Shakespeare's will.

Henry James commented: "I am haunted by the conviction that the divine William is the biggest and most successful fraud ever practiced on a patient world."

However, those who believe that Shakespeare was not the author, have the problem of coming up with the person who was. The greatest plays in all of English literature did not write themselves. There was an author, but who was he? If Shakespeare did not write them, who did?

There have been three major contenders for authorship: Edward de Vere, seventeenth Earl of Oxford (1550–1604); Francis Bacon (1561–1626); and Christopher Marlowe (1564–1593?). But each contender poses problems that have to be solved before being acclaimed author.

Oxfordians have several very serious dilemmas: Oxford died in 1604 well before the last plays were written. There is no documented evidence anywhere that he wrote any of the works attributed to Shakespeare. Also, the question of motivation comes up. Why would the creator of the greatest works in English literature keep it a secret? Yes, he was of the nobility, but considering the value of the works in question, it seems unbelievable that the author would not have claimed his rightful place in literary history by saying something in a will or elsewhere about having written these immortal works. In addition, he was neither a literary genius nor a professional writer.

The case for Francis Bacon is also weak. He died three years after the publication of Shakespeare's Works in the First Folio in 1623. If he had been the true author, there would have been some indication somewhere that he had had a hand in the great book that was being published. And why would he have hidden his authorship? He wrote a good deal in the scientific and philosophical fields. So there would have been no reason for him to deny having written these extraordinary plays and poems if he had actually done so.

The simple truth is that the only contender who had the talent and genius to write the poems and plays was Christopher Marlowe. And he had the most

compelling reason to maintain the secrecy of his authorship: he was supposed to be dead!

The history books tell us that Marlowe was killed in a tavern brawl in 1593. But was he actually killed, or was the killing a staged plan to get Marlowe out of harm's way? He was on the verge of being indicted by the Privy Council on serious charges of blasphemy, atheism, and sexual immorality, all punishable by hanging. He was out on bail, living at the house of his patron and benefactor, Sir Thomas Walsingham, a cousin to Sir Francis Walsingham, founder of Queen Elizabeth's secret intelligence service. Marlowe had been recruited into the network as a student at Cambridge University and had performed valuable service for Walsingham as a spy in France. Thomas Walsingham had also served as an agent and courier for his cousin. He and his staff were all involved in the spy network. They had access to passports, papers, ships crossing the Channel.

To save Marlowe's life, they had to stage a phony incident in which Marlowe would be killed. His "death" would close the book on the prosecution. But they had to come up with a body that the Coroner could accept as the dead Marlowe. Apparently they found a body, and we are now quite certain whose body it was. As for the body-switching idea, we don't know who originated it. We can only speculate. But we do know that in *Measure for Measure* there is a body-switching plot in which a body is used to substitute for someone alive slated for execution. Marlowe left all sorts of clues in the plays he wrote after his alleged death.

By 1593, Marlowe had already established himself as a superb playwright and poet.

It should be noted that both Marlowe and Shakespeare were the very same age, having both been born in 1564. When Marlowe was supposed to have died on May 30, 1593, at the age of 29, he had already written *Ovid's Elegies*, *The First Book of Lucan*, *Hero and Leander*, *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, *Tamburlaine I & II*, *The Massacre at Paris*, *The Jew of Malta*, *Doctor Faustus* and *Edward II*.

Before William Shakespeare reached the age of 29, he wrote nothing.

Shakespeare's first registered work is the poem *Venus and Adonis*, registered anonymously on April 18, 1593, at the Stationers Company and published on September 28, 1593, with Shakespeare's name not on the title page but at the end of a dedication to the 20-year-old Earl of Southampton. Interesting coincidence: When Marlowe's official career ends, Shakespeare's begins.

So what was Shakespeare's role in all of this? He became the frontman through whom the plays and poems of Marlowe could reach the stage and the public.

Every Shakespearean scholar acknowledges the enormous influence that Marlowe had on Shakespeare's works. Yet, there is no evidence that Marlowe ever knew Shakespeare or worked with him. But there was one man who knew both Marlowe and Shakespeare and no doubt knew the truth about their relationship.

He knew that Marlowe had not been killed, that his murder had been faked by his wealthy patron, Sir Thomas Walsingham. That man was Edward Blount, who published Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* in 1598, dedicated to Sir Thomas. Twenty-five years later, Blount was the prime mover behind the publication of the famous First Folio, containing Shakespeare's full works.

If it wasn't for the First Folio, Shakespeare's name would have probably fallen into total obscurity. His death in 1616 was not acknowledged by anyone in the literary world. He was not brought to Westminster Abbey for burial. Prior to his death, Shakespeare's name appeared on only nine plays, which became part of the Shakespeare canon. The first of them, *Love's Labour's Lost*, was published in 1598, five years after his name had first appeared on the dedication of *Venus and Adonis*. Then two years later, in 1600, four plays were published with Shakespeare's name on them. Another was published in 1602, one in 1603, one five years later in 1608, and the last one in 1609.

Shakespeare's name also appeared on a number of plays that have never been accepted as part of the Shakespeare canon. In all, only 16 of the 36 plays in the First Folio were published before 1623 and only nine of those bore Shakespeare's name. The remaining twenty plays appeared in print for the first time in the First Folio. And it is only because Shakespeare's name is on the Title Page of the First Folio as author, that he was given authorship of all of the plays, published and unpublished. Among those twenty unpublished plays were such masterpieces as *Julius Caesar, Measure for Measure, Twelfth Night, Macbeth*, and *Antony and Cleopatra.*

But where did those twenty plays come from? Shakespeare's will mentioned no such unpublished plays. Nor did his heirs make a bee-line to the publishers of the First Folio requesting remuneration for the use of their father's works.

The one man who probably knew where to find the twenty plays was Edward Blount. In 1623, Thomas Walsingham was still alive. There is good reason to believe that he had some of them in his possession. Some of them were also in the archives of the theatre that owned them. But Blount knew where to find them all. And undoubtedly he knew which ones were the genuine articles.

We don't know exactly when Marlowe died, but we believe that he lived long enough to edit and revise the plays being prepared for the First Folio of 1623. Apparently he stopped writing plays in 1611, which is why Shakespeare "retired" at about that time. With no more plays forthcoming from the fountainhead of genius, Shakespeare could leave London and retire to Stratford-upon-Avon in affluent splendor.

There are many mysteries in this story that must be solved. New discoveries that confirm Marlowe's life after 1593 have made it most likely that we can, at last, identify the true writer of the Shakespeare canon. We shall attempt to present all of the facts that will make it possible to finally resolve the authorship question. But even should it be proven beyond a shadow of a doubt that Marlowe was indeed the author of the works attributed to the man from Stratford-upon-Avon, the very fact that Shakespeare's name appears as author of the

First Folio guarantees that his name will continue to be credited with authorship by most people.

Then, what value is it to go to all the trouble to establish Marlowe's authorship if in the end Shakespeare's name on the First Folio will forever grant him credit as author? The value is that all shall be able to read the Sonnets and the plays with different eyes. As Wayne Dyer, author of *The Power of Intention,* has observed: "When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change." In other words, readers shall be able to enjoy the poems and plays on a new level as never before. Also, readers shall be forced to know much more history, which is not a bad thing. And readers shall find new biographies being written to explain how this bizarre conspiracy involving the greatest literary genius in all history came to pass.

2

Canterbury and Stratford

There is great and startling contrast between the lives of Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare if we simply look at the biographical data available. It is only when one has a detailed knowledge of Marlowe's life that one begins to find all sorts of references to that life in the works attributed to Shakespeare. Indeed, Marlowe's life adds tremendous depth and color to the works themselves.

Both men were born in 1564, Marlowe in historically rich and magnificent Canterbury, the ecclesiastical capital of England, Shakespeare in tranquil rural Stratford. Marlowe's education is fully documented, from his scholarship to the prestigious King's School in Canterbury to his scholarship to Cambridge University. There is no documentation at all relating to Shakespeare's education. There is much data available on Marlowe's career as a playwright and poet right up to the day of his supposed death. There is no data about Shakespeare having written anything before the publication of *Venus and Adonis* several months after Marlowe's supposed demise, at which time Shakespeare suddenly emerges as a full-blown poetic genius without prior publication or known education.

Christopher Marlowe was born on or about February 26, 1564, in Canterbury. Because it was the ecclesiastical capital of England, it was the center of tremendous religious turmoil. Canterbury, located some 62 miles south of London in Kent, is a city steeped in history. It was the city through which Christianity was introduced to England in A.D. 597 by Augustine and his missionaries from Rome. It is the city in which Thomas a Becket, the Archbishop appointed by Henry II, was murdered in the cathedral in 1170. It is the city of pilgrimage, of Chaucer's famous Canterbury Tales. And it is the city that became the focus of the Anglican faith with its Archbishop becoming the Primate of all England.

Pilgrims came from all over the world to visit the Becket shrine. Those who came from abroad are said to have taken the path that is now the North Downs Way, which today offers walkers beautiful views of fields, hop gardens and the sea. People also came from other towns in England like those in the Canterbury Tales.

The bejeweled shrine that commemorated the murder of Becket was destroyed during the reign of Henry VIII and the Dissolution of the Monasteries. The ruins of St. Augustine's Abbey near the Cathedral are a stark reminder of the religious strife that rocked England in the early sixteenth century.

The present Cathedral, which dominates the center of the city, was completed in 1154. In 1376, Archbishop Sudbury ordered the building of a new nave. The first cathedral was built in AD 597 when the town was known to the Saxons as Cant-wara-byrig, which means the borough of the men of Kent. It was built for the baptism of King Ethelbert of Kent, whose Queen, Bertha, was already a Christian.

The King's School, which Marlowe was to attend, occupied buildings adjacent to the Cathedral, and was developed out of the early teaching provided at the monastery. It was refounded by Henry VIII in 1541 as the King's School after the dissolution of the monastery in 1538. Thus, Marlowe was born in a city with a great and rich historical tradition that affected all of England. And there is little doubt that all of this became part of his psyche, his understanding of history, and his place in it.

To better understand the Canterbury context, it is necessary to know the background of the religious struggle that created so much turmoil in England and throughout Europe. The Reformation movement began in 1517 when Martin Luther (1483–1546) nailed his famous 95 theses to the front door of the Castle Church in Wittenburg, Germany. At that time Henry VIII (1491–1547) was king of England. He reigned from 1509 to 1547. Henry was a good Catholic at the time of Luther's rebellion and wrote a book on the Sacraments in reply to Luther, for which he received the title of "Defender of the Faith" from the Pope. But when the Pope refused to grant Henry a divorce from his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, he divorced her anyway and requested Parliament to help him end financial and legal ties with Rome. He assumed to himself the title of Protector and Supreme Head of the Church and Clergy of England.

Henry, in dire need of money, then launched a campaign to confiscate the property of the Catholic Church. In Canterbury, the bejeweled shrine that commemorated the murder of Becket was destroyed and St. Augustine's Abbey fell victim to the Dissolution of the Monasteries, which began in 1536.

Henry VIII died in 1547 and was succeeded by Edward VI, a son by his third wife, Jane Seymour. Henry had had six wives: Catherine of Aragon, mother of Mary I, divorced; Anne Boleyn, mother of Elizabeth I, beheaded; Jane Seymour, mother of Edward VI, died; Anne of Cleves, divorced; Catherine Howard, beheaded; and Catherine Parr, who outlived the King.

Edward was only nine years old when he ascended the throne so that the country was ruled essentially by his uncle, Edward Seymour, the Duke of Somerset (1506–1552), and a regency council of sixteen. The Duke had been helped by the ambitious John Dudley, Earl of Warwick, who later became Duke of Northumberland. Seymour, the "Protector," with Archbishop Cranmer, proceeded at once to further the Reformation in England. They drew their main

reformist theology from John Calvin (1509–1564), whose *Institutes of the Christian Religion* was published in the early 1540s. John Knox, Nicholas Ridley, Hugh Latimer and Hooper, all Calvinists, were appointed Court preachers. Cranmer's Book of Common Prayer written in 1549 was introduced to bring uniformity of worship and turned England into a Protestant state, causing a rebellion in the southwest and widening the gap between Catholics and Protestants. In 1551, Parliament adopted the Forty-two Articles, setting forth the doctrines of the Anglican Church. The Forty-two Articles reflected the growing influence of Calvinist teaching.

In foreign affairs, Edward inherited his father's problems with Scotland and France. The Duke of Somerset launched an invasion of Scotland in order to force the Scots to agree to a marriage between Edward VI and four-year-old Mary Stuart. Although the Scots were defeated in 1547, they sent young Mary to France where she later married Francis, heir to the French throne. Northumberland then managed to depose Seymour in 1549 and replace him as the King's protector. In 1552, the efforts of Dudley and his allies led to Somerset's execution on charges of high treason.

By 1553, it became obvious that the young king was dying of consumption. In order to prevent the King's Catholic sister Mary from ascending the throne, Northumberland conspired to have Lady Jane Grey (1537–1554), daughter of the Duke of Suffolk, named successor to the throne by Edward VI. According to this plan, Northumberland's son, Lord Guilford Dudley, would marry Jane Grey who would then be Queen.

Following Edward's death in July 1553, the sixteen-year-old Lady Jane was proclaimed Queen. However, too many Englishmen resented Northumberland's attempt to deprive the rightful heir of her throne. The coup collapsed and Mary entered London with her supporters. Northumberland was imprisoned and executed. Lady Jane Grey, whose reign lasted only nine days, was executed a year later with her husband.

Mary Tudor, England's first reigning queen, had been raised as a Roman Catholic and believed her mission was to restore Roman Catholicism in England and, as the daughter of Catherine of Aragon, to forge an alliance with Catholic Spain, her mother's homeland.

Thus, her first act as Queen was to repeal the religious legislation enacted during the reign of her younger brother. In July 1554, she married Philip of Hapsburg, son of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. Two years later, he became King Philip II of Spain.

Acting on her own authority, Mary forced continental Protestants to leave England and installed Catholic bishops in office. John Knox went into exile, taking refuge with John Calvin in Geneva. Stephen Gardiner (1493–1555), the bishop of Winchester, became lord chancellor. In November 1554, Cardinal Reginald Pole (1500–1558), the papal legate, went before a session of Parliament and received England back into the Roman Catholic Church. In the Act of Repeal of 1554, Parliament repealed the Act of Supremacy of 1534 and other anti-Papal

laws dating from the reign of Henry VIII. However, there was no attempt to restore the confiscated monastic lands.

During 1555 and 1556, Mary stepped up the persecution of Protestants. Some 300 who refused to recant were burned at the stake, including Protestant bishops Hugh Latimer, Nicholas Ridley, as well as former archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer. As a result of her reign of terror, the Queen became known as Bloody Mary.

After a five-year reign, Mary I died in 1558 and was succeeded by Elizabeth I (1533–1603), daughter of Henry VIII by his second wife, Anne Boleyn. The new queen, the last of the Tudors, inherited an England torn by religious strife. Under her tutelage, the Parliament of 1559 enacted two famous statutes: the Act of Supremacy, which finally severed England from Rome by substituting royal for Papal supremacy in the Church; and the Act of Uniformity, which gave the Anglican Church its Prayer Book and made England a Protestant country. With Protestantism restored as the religion of England, Elizabeth chose a very capable council of Protestant advisors: Cecil (later Lord Burghley), Walsingham, Bacon, Leicester, Drake, Raleigh, all of whom helped Elizabeth create stability and strength to the English state. Although the Protestants were now in power, the Catholics still remained a subversive threat.

This was the England that Christopher Marlowe was born into in 1564. Elizabeth had been on the throne for five years. Marlowe's parents had migrated to Canterbury from other towns in Kent. His father, John Marlowe, was born in the village of Ospringe beside Faversham in 1536, during the reign of Henry VIII. His mother, Katherine Arthur came from a family in Dover. She spent her girlhood among the colorful surroundings of the busy port and great stronghold of Dover.

John Marlowe came to Canterbury in 1556, just at the time when Bloody Mary was burning Protestant martyrs at the stake at the sandy hollows at Wincheap, half a mile from Canterbury, where more than 40 Protestant martyrs perished. In 1559, John became apprenticed to Gerard Richardson, a cobbler, or shoemaker. Four years later, John became a freeman of Canterbury. He was now an established craftsman. In May 1561, he married Katherine Arthur.

John and Katherine Marlowe were to produce nine children. Mary, the first born, was baptised on May 21, 1562, and died two years later. Christopher was baptised on February 26, 1564. Margaret, the third child, was baptised on December 18, 1565. She married John Jordan, a tailor, in June 1590. She lived to the age of 76. Child number four, born in October 1568, died a few days later. Jane, the fifth child, was christened on August 20, 1569, married John Moore in 1582, and died in childbirth in 1583. Thomas, the sixth child, was baptised July 26, 1670, and died three weeks later. Anne Marlowe, the seventh child, was baptised on July 14, 1571. She married John Cranford, a shoemaker in Canterbury in June 1593, and died in 1652 at age 81.

Dorothy Marlowe, the eighth child, was christened on October 18, 1573. She married Thomas Graddell, glover and later vintner, innkeeper and hack-

neyman in Canterbury. She outlived her husband who died in 1625. Thomas, the ninth child, was baptised on April 8, 1576. He is listed as choirboy at Archbishop Whitgift's Cathedral Visitation in 1589. Since he was not mentioned in his mother's will, it is probable that he was dead by the time it was drawn up in 1605.

Thus, Christopher Marlowe was brought up in a house of four baby sisters, which may have added something to his psychological understanding of women. Since he was a highly intelligent youngster, we can imagine the kind of chatter that went on between the future poet and his sisters. And his father's customers must have given him ample opportunity to observe human beings of every shape and humor.

Sixteenth century Canterbury, with a population of between 3,000 and 4,000 persons, was a wonderfully busy place in which to grow up. It was a city close to the countryside. Cows grazed within 100 yards of John Marlowe's shop and local women went milking every morning. Gleaning went on at harvest time in Barton Fields. The parish of St. George, in which Marlowe's shop was located, also lay between the cattle market on the one side and the butchers' shambles on the other. A dominant sound of Marlowe's youth must have been the moans of cattle being led to the slaughter only a few yards away. The tubs of blood and entrails that had to be disposed of no doubt produced an unpleasant odor in the neighborhood.

As a place of pilgrimage, Canterbury brought an endless parade of human beings to its streets. It was also a city of commerce located on the road from Dover to London. It was also a walled city, with "two lofty turrets that command the town" at the West Gate. There was a grim prison in the South Tower where Protestant martyrs awaited death at the stake during the reign of Catholic Mary Tudor.

Canterbury was also a city of great pageantry and pomp. In September of 1573, Elizabeth came to Canterbury on one of her many royal visits to the city where she held Court at the King's Lodging, a palace built outside the city by her father, Henry VIII.

As a child Marlowe was able to see with his own eyes the ruins of the once great Abbey, the physical evidence of that great conflict between Henry VIII and the Pope in Rome. The antagonism between Catholics and Protestants would become a major factor in his life. The city was also full of Huguenot refugees from France, many of whom had fled after the St. Bartholomew's Massacre that began in Paris on August 24, 1572, in which thousands of Huguenots were slaughtered by order of King Charles IX under the influence of his mother, Catherine de Medici. Marlowe would one day write a play about that horrible event, *The Massacre at Paris.*

The Huguenots, or French Calvinists, were a very moral, frugal, and highly industrious group of refugees, and Marlowe undoubtedly got to know some of the families. If he had attended a Huguenot primary school, he would have learned French and gotten to know some of the children and their parents. Also,

his knowledge of French would hold him in good stead in later years when he was asked to go on a spying mission to France.

The main economic activity in Canterbury was in the hands of craftsmen and shopkeepers of middle rank. Among John Marlowe's customers were the town's professional men, including clergy, lawyers, school teachers, physicians and surgeons.

It was also in Canterbury that Christopher was introduced to the world of the theater. The city authority organized and financed religious drama, and there was a cycle of biblical plays based upon St. Dunstan's church outside the western city walls. In almost every year of Marlowe's boyhood there is a record of travelling players coming into Canterbury. Groups of actors with the required aristocratic patrons frequently performed plays in the town.

There is good reason to believe that when Christopher was eight he was recruited as a page to serve one of the young noblemen about to embark on a tour of the Continent. Marlowe was a child prodigy who no doubt attracted the attention of Archbishop Matthew Parker, a close friend of Lord Burghley's. We believe that the nobleman in need of a page was Philip Sidney, nephew of the Earl of Leicester's, who, in 1572, at the age of 18, was preparing for a two-year tour of the Continent with the blessings of the Queen.

What did a page do during such a journey? He tended the horses, went on errands, kept an eye on the baggage, delivered messages, was at the beck and call of his master, and learned the art of obedience. It was good training for an inquisitive young mind. Later, as a playwright, Marlowe would use pages in several plays. In *Love's Labour's Lost*, we are given a very humorous idea of what went on between a Master and his Page, the latter being far more intelligent and witty than his Master.

Who was Philip Sidney? Born at the family home at Penshurst Place in Kent in 1554, Sidney was the son of Sir Henry Sidney and Mary Dudley, the daughter of the ill-fated Earl of Northumberland and sister of the Earl of Leicester, the Queen's closest confidant. Both Sidneys served the Queen, Sir Henry as Lord President of the Welsh Marches and later as Lord Deputy of Ireland, and Lady Sidney as a lady-in-waiting to the Queen. When Elizabeth came down with smallpox, it was Lady Sidney who nursed her, catching the disease herself and passing it on to her son Philip, who was slightly pockmarked for life.

In October 1564, at age 10, Sidney entered Shrewsbury School at the same time as his lifelong friend, Fulke Greville (1554–1628). Four years later he entered Oxford and was a brilliant student. In the spring of 1572, he was ready for his tour of the Continent. He would not travel alone. He was attached to the suite of the Earl of Lincoln who was going to Paris to sign the Treaty of Blois. Sidney followed the earl to Dover with his own company of three servants and four horses. Was young Christopher Marlowe one of the servants? The dates and circumstances fit perfectly.

And so, for the next six years young Marlowe was to travel across Europe with Master Philip Sidney, visiting Paris, Frankfort, Vienna, Venice, Padua, and

other cities. In Paris he would witness the massacre of the Huguenots. He would learn much about religion and politics. He would also learn how the aristocracy lived and the values they held. He would return to England with Sidney and continue to serve him until he was ready, at age 14, to enter the King's School in Canterbury.

By the time Christopher was fifteen, his father, a well-respected freeman, had risen in status to the point where he became a bondsman for couples seeking marriage licenses. John Marlowe took his religion seriously and became a churchwarden.

Thus, it is not surprising that Christopher was marked for the church early in life. As the bright and highly literate son of a cobbler, the church offered upward mobililty toward a very important profession, with respectable social standing, and economic security. Undoubtedly, young Marlowe's talents were recognized by the authorities who decided that Christopher was eligible for a scholarship to the King's School where he would receive the kind of education reserved for the elite.

As for William Shakespeare, he was baptised on April 26, 1564, in Stratford-upon-Avon. He was the oldest son of John Shakespeare and Mary Arden, an heiress from a good family at Wilmcote. John Shakespeare's marriage enabled him to play a prominent part in the town's affairs for some twenty years, ending up in 1568 as bailiff, or mayor, of the borough. Although he could have sent William to school, there is no record of his having done so, even though there was a grammar school in town. Despite several hundred years of research, we know almost nothing of William's childhood. While researchers keep finding out more and more about Christopher Marlowe, they are finding less and less about Shakespeare. The reason? There is nothing there to be found.

Stratford, a village with about 2,000 inhabitants, was a country market town. The family lived in a house on Henley Street, where John Shakespeare had his glover's shop. William had two brothers and a sister. His brother Edmund followed him into the theater to become a player. He died at age 27. In all, there are only two substantiated facts known about William Shakespeare's early life: his birth, and his marriage at age 18 to Anne Hathaway in 1582.

As for Marlowe's experience as a page, the reader will find in later chapters a more detailed account of Philip Sidney's travels on the Continent and Marlowe's relationship with Sidney's famous sister, the Countess of Pembroke.

3

The King's School

On January 14, 1579, Christopher entered the King's School on one of the fifty scholarships reserved for poor boys between the ages of nine and fifteen. Marlowe, just short of fifteen by a few weeks, was still eligible, and made it under the wire. He still had the voice of a boy soprano and an obvious aptitude for learning. It is probable that his service as a page to Philip Sidney added to his eligibility for a scholarship.

Charles Norman writes of the school:

> Piety and Latin made up the curriculum, and a responsive psalm began and ended the day. Belled in his gown, he went punctually to and fro from St. Andrew's, past the Rush Market, the Bishop's palace, and almost to the city's walls, storing his mind with magnificent, medieval images—the towers, streets and streams of Canterbury; churches at dusk blazing like jewels, and priories and friaries standing watch at the outposts of the city [p. 12].

What kind of an education did young Christopher acquire at the King's School? A. D. Wraight in her book, *In Search of Christopher Marlowe*, describes how rigorous it was (pp. 40–41):

> According to the Statutes of 1541 governing the curriculum, by the time a boy reached the Fourth Form (and Marlowe would have gone into this straight away at least, or probably into a higher grade) he would have been required to know his Latin syntax thoroughly, and there he would be "practiced in poetic tales, the familiar letters of learned men, and other literature of that sort." In the Fifth Form Latin oratory and classical rules of verse-making were taught, and here Christopher would have made a beginning in "translating the most chaste Poets and best Historians." In the Sixth and highest form he would cope with Erasmus and "learn to vary speech in every mood" in Latin. Here the boys would be given the opportunity to "taste Horace, Cicero and other authors of that class, and shall compete with one another in declamations, that the competition may encourage them in their studies."
>
> The entire school of fifty boys underwent examination by the headmaster once a week, and those who had shown themselves proficient might expect to be upgraded at any of the three yearly periods when this was done.

Although school lessons concluded at 5 P.M., there was "prep" to be done between 6 and 7 P.M. under the supervision of the masters. This took the form of repeating the lessons they had learnt "to their fellow pupils who have become ripe in learning." It may be assumed that Kit was usually one of the latter since he was later favoured with a second scholarship, which is hardly likely to have been granted to the shoemaker's son if he had been lazy at his work.

Obviously, the main function of the school was to provide the pupils with a thorough grounding in Latin and Greek. To help develop fluency, theatrical performances using these languages were given by the pupils at Christmas. We can imagine that these performances stirred in Marlowe an interest in drama that led him later to try his hand as a playwright.

Indications of the rigor and extent of Marlowe's education at the King's School and later at Cambridge are to be found in all of his works as well as in the works attributed to Shakespeare. Scholars assume that Shakespeare knew Latin because there is so much of it in the plays and poems. Although there was a grammar school in Stratford, there is no indication anywhere that Shakespeare attended the school or received elsewhere the kind of intensive classical education that Marlowe had. As Harvard professor William Allen Neilson bluntly wrote in 1923: "Of the education of the poet [Shakespeare] we have no record." This naturally has led many to believe that Shakespeare could not possibly have written these works—even though no record does not mean no education.

Probably the most influential individual at this moment in young Marlowe's life was the school's headmaster, John Gresshop, a man of considerable scholarly attainments, a graduate of Christ Church, Oxford. Gresshop owned a remarkable private library of 350 books, one of the largest libraries in the kingdom, a library larger than almost anyone outside the circles of bishops and noblemen, far greater than the private collections of university dons. In his collection were classical works by Plato, Cicero, Virgil, Theophrastus, Thucydides, Aristophanes, Plautus, Terence, Sophocles, Isocrates, Claudian, Juvenal, Caesar, Aulus Gellius, and Boethius.

Gresshop had a good many Bibles: a "Latin Bible" (Jerome's Vulgate), a Geneva Bible, a couple of Greek Testaments, another Latin Bible in the version of Sante Pagnino and yet another rendered by Sebastian Castallio. In addition to medical and history books, he had a good collection of books on education: Sadolet's *De Pueris Instituendis,* a volume titled *De Ratione Studii Puerilis,* Castallio's *Dialogi,* and the educational classic of the day, Roger Ascham's *Scholemaster,* with its advanced and humane theories of teaching methods.

The collection also included works by the Reformers: Luther, Bishop Fisher, Bucer, Melancthon, Beza, John Knox, and others. But probably the one book that must have boggled the mind of young Marlowe was Gresshop's copy of Ovid's *Metamorphoses,* illustrated with its hundred or more woodcuts depicting heady riots, incests, rapes, a book which might astonish and shock and would probably have been kept well away from the schoolroom door in the lower study.

William Urry writes in *Christopher Marlowe and Canterbury* (p. 48):

> The influence of Gresshop upon Christopher Marlowe is impossible to determine but remains a tantalizing possibility. Had the headmaster been prepared to allow his boys near his books then Marlowe would not have been compelled to wait until his arrival at Cambridge before having the chance to browse through a learned library. The mere proximity of books to the schoolroom may, of course, have acted as a stimulus to inquiring minds. Indeed, Gresshop may have conveyed something of his books and his interest in them to his pupils. Perhaps in one way or another Gresshop and his library were crucial to Marlowe's development.

It is easy to imagine that Gresshop was immediately captivated by the intellectually lively and curious Christopher Marlowe and permitted the future playwright to read what he found of interest in his library. Gresshop might have even shown the young scholar the illustrated Ovid, for we know that Ovid played a very important part in Marlowe's literary life. His translation of Ovid's *Amores* might have even been started at the King's School where translating from Latin to English was an important part of the curriculum. By then, Marlowe had undoubtedly become completely fascinated by the sexual mores of the ancients.

John Gresshop died in February of 1580, when Marlowe had been a scholar for one year. The headmaster was unmarried at the time of his death. On February 23, 1580, Canon John Hill of the cathedral headed a group of members of the cathedral foundation which met at the late headmaster's house to make an inventory of his goods. They made a list of all of the books in his private library and an inventory of his clothes, which tells us something of what the headmaster must have looked like to his students: "Two pairs of kersey hose, two old doublets, one of smooth fabric called 'rash' and the other of 'mockadew' [a sort of mohair]. He had an old Spanish leather jerkin, a cap and a hat, with an old mockadew cossack. There were old cloaks and old gowns. There was a jacket of old damask probably surviving from younger days at Oxford, with a girdle of changeable silk" (Urry, p. 46).

As for the scholarships, surviving cathedral accounts for 1578–79 and for 1580–81 indicate that scholars were provided with an allowance of 4 pounds per annum, well above the amount on which some families of poor workmen lived. Marlowe received his first quarterly payment at Lady Day 1579 and received his one pound at Midsummer 1580 and at the following Michaelmas.

The school day was long and arduous. It began at 6 in the morning with prayers in Latin. The students prayed for the Queen and recited Psalm 21, which begins: "The king shall rejoice in thy strength, O Lord: yea how greatly shall he rejoice in thy salvation."

That was followed by verses and responses and the Lord's Prayer. At the end of the long school day came Evening Prayer as the cathedral clock struck five and the boys stood up to recite the little psalm, *Ecce nunc benedicte.* There was a meal at 6, after which the boys had to recite their lessons to seniors who had become "ripe in learning."

Recitation was the key method of learning used in classical education right up to the nineteenth century. Educator John S. Hart wrote in 1869 (*In the School*

Room): "It is by telling other people what we have learned, that we learn it more effectually, and make it more completely our own." He also wrote:

> Memory is God's gift, by which alone we are able to retain our intellectual acquisitions. ... And whatever increases the activity and power of the memory, gives at once value and growth to every other power. ... Memory is the store-house of our ideas [pp. 47–48].
>
> The creeds and catechisms of the Christian church are among the best products of human intellect as mere specimens of verbal statement, and are valuable, if for nothing else, as a means of exercising the memory. A child who has thoroughly mastered a good catechism has his intellectual store-house already reduced to some order and system. ... Constant, almost endless repetition is the inexorable price of sound mental accumulation [pp. 49–50].

The kind of exercises in memorization that Marlowe underwent at the King's School no doubt gave him an intellectual confidence that made it possible for him to produce the celebrated poems and plays which he began writing as a student at Cambridge. The emphasis on language study was crucial. Hart writes: "The study of language, more than any other study, tends to make the mind acute, discriminating, and exact" (p. 68).

There is no documentary evidence that Shakespeare had that kind of education, and without it, it is doubtful that he could have written the plays attributed to him. Recitation and memorization in English and Latin, which Marlowe had in abundance, were not experienced by Shakespeare. They were not the kind of mental skills you could pick up on your own without rigorous school instruction. Were it so, there would have been some evidence of it in Shakespeare's life.

Also, Marlowe must have learned much about the eighty or so pupils who attended the school with him. Many went on to become members of the Anglican clergy, and one appears to have become a Justice of the Peace. Two became lawyers, three became schoolmasters, and one a Cathedral choirmaster. One classmate, Samuel Kennett, was converted to Catholicism and eventually became a Benedictine monk. Another schoolmate, Leonard Sweeting, was apprenticed to the registrar of the church courts, and at age 23 became a Notary Public. Like Gresshop, he became a book collector, and in an inventory taken at his death, among his books of poetry was a copy of Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*.

4

Marlowe at Cambridge

In December of 1580, three weeks before Christmas, Christopher Marlowe, at age seventeen, bade farewell to his family and friends in Canterbury, and made his way to Cambridge where he presented himself to the University authorities. He held an Archbishop Parker scholarship for Corpus Christi College as a divinity student. He was to spend the next six years of his life at Corpus Christi with the presumed goal of preparing himself for Holy Orders.

The Canterbury scholarships had been established by Archbishop Matthew Parker in 1569 with income from Westminster rents. The students were nominated from pupils attending the King's School in Canterbury and two schools in Norfolk. The Archbishop's goal was to help talented young men pursue clerical careers in the Anglican church. He wrote in his will: "I wish my Executors to make ready a chamber in that college, now called A Storehouse, for three other of my scholars to inhabit, for each of which I wish three pounds, six shillings and eight pence to be given annually in the form which my Executors shall prescribe in writing. Of which scholars I wish the first to be chosen from Canterbury [King's] School, and to be a native of that place."

When the Archbishop died in 1575, his son John Parker, Executor of his father's will, retained control of the nominations. He added to the will: "All which said schollers shall and must at the time of their election be so enterd into the skill of song as that they shall at the first sight solf and sing plaine song. And that they shalbe of the best and aptest schollers well instructed in their gramer and if it may be such as can make a verse."

We can assume that it was Christopher Marlowe's record at the King's School and his service as a page to Philip Sidney that made him eminently eligible for a scholarship to Corpus Christi. No doubt, John Parker, must have been greatly impressed by Marlowe's exceptional intelligence and outstanding academic talents which were recognized by his teachers and the headmaster. That Marlowe got the scholarship is a tribute not only to his exceptional talents but to the community's desire to advance such talent at the community's expense.

By entering Cambridge, the cobbler's son was well on his way to becoming a member of England's literary elite. According to Urry, the Cambridge of Marlowe's day was a community of over 1,800 teachers and students, set in a flourishing town with a population of about 5,000. There was a wide variety of academic buildings, some from the Middle Ages, with new building and rebuilding going on. Christopher Marlowe's quarters were probably in the old quadrangle at Corpus Christi College. The living Quarters for Parker's scholars were equipped with a small but useful collection of texts and reference books such as Greek and Latin Bibles, Erasmus's New Testament, a Latin Bible concordance, classical lexicons, and a history of Cambridge. We can assume that the bookish Marlowe took advantage of every opportunity to read the books available to him. The plays and poems he was to write reflected the enormous storehouse of literary knowledge he acquired at the University.

It is also in 1580 that we first hear of Marlowe's future benefactor, Thomas Walsingham, who was born in 1563 and was therefore a year older than Marlowe. He was already working for his cousin, Sir Francis Walsingham, head of Elizabeth's secret service, as a courier, bringing letters from Her Majesty's ambassador in Paris to London.

Where was William Shakespeare in 1580? Having been baptised on April 26, 1564, he would have been 16 in 1580. He was still in Stratford, no doubt helping his father in his various businesses. On November 28, 1582, at age 18, Shakespeare obtained a license to marry Anne Hathaway, a woman eight years his senior. Within six months of the marriage, a daughter, Susanna, was born to the couple on May 26, 1583. The record of baptism of Shakespeare's only other children, the twins, Hamnet and Judith, in February, 1585, practically exhausts the documentary evidence concerning Shakespeare in Stratford until 1596.

During this period, Shakespeare's father was undergoing great financial difficulties and undoubtedly needed the assistance of his son. H. Snowden Ward writes in *Shakespeare's Town and Times:* "Meanwhile, what do we know of William Shakespeare? There is no certain evidence, but the probability is that he was busy in his father's trade. ... Until further evidence is forthcoming we must consider him a glover. ... We are fairly safe, therefore, in saying that during the few years before his marriage, the poet was engrossed with the mysteries of skins and wool, tan-bark and timber, looking after the farm-land, and the glove sewers at their houses."

In 1581, the colleges at Cambridge numbered some 1,862 students with about 100 preachers among them. To obtain a Bachelor of Arts degree, students were required to be in residence for sixteen terms or four years. The daily regimen was quite rigorous. Students rose at four in the morning, joined in prayers for an hour in the chapel, then entered into private study or common lectures until evening.

The first year of studies leading to a B.A. were devoted to lectures in rhetoric, in which the works of Quintilian, Hermogenes and Cicero were read. The second and third years were devoted to logic in which Aristotle's dialectical

works and Cicero's Topics were read. The fourth year was devoted to the study of philosophy in which the works of Aristotle, Pliny, and Plato were read.

According to a Cambridge University document dated October 29, 1581, now in the British Museum, we know which professors taught which subjects and who were the students they lectured to. In the listing we find that Marlowe, (spelled Marley, one of the many variants in the spelling of his name), was attending lectures by Professor M. Johnes in Dialectics. As an undergraduate, one also studied Greek, arithmetic and elements of astronomy. After obtaining the B.A., one continued with the more advanced courses in astronomy, mathematics, and philosophy. Divinity, medicine and law were undertaken after receiving a Master of Arts degree.

It is probable that Marlowe started writing poetry in that first year at Cambridge. He was in the midst of academic brilliance, professors and students representing the cream of the Elizabethan intellectual elite. The challenge to exercise his own talents no doubt drove him to start writing. His first effort was a translation of the *Elegies* in Ovid's *Amores*, one of the most erotic works of the ancients. How did a 17-year-old divinity student at Corpus Christi College exercise his libido? By translating the erotic poetry from a less sexually repressed civilization. It would be years before Ovid's *Elegies* would be published in book form. But Marlowe was certainly aware that he was blazing a new trail in English verse.

Stephen Orgel, in a brief critique of the *Elegies*, (*Christopher Marlowe: The Complete Poems and Translations)* wrote in 1971 (p. 233):

> The *Amores* were the least well known of Ovid's major works to the Elizabethans, and Marlowe's translation is the first in English. His interest would have been as much in their urbanity of tone as in their world of erotic possibilities.... But Marlowe's Ovidian elegies are more than translations. They undertake, with remarkable energy and ingenuity, the adaptation of a classical mode to the uses of English poetry. In a sense, this is Marlowe's sonnet sequence, the psychomachia of a poet-lover whose love is both his creation and his ultimate monomania, frustration and despair. The excitement that Marlowe brought to these poems is obvious, as much in the vividness and wit of the language as in the evident haste and occasional carelessness of the composition. At least six early and surreptitious editions (one of which was banned and burned by episcopal order in 1599) testify to the excitement readers got out of the work. But licentiousness is not the *Elegies*' primary claim on our attention; indeed, by current standards they are barely warm. Their rhetoric, however, brings a new tone and a new range of possibilities into English verse.

We can imagine that Marlowe must have shown some of these verses to fellow students who shared his erotic interest. In Elegia II he wrote (p. 114):

> Unwilling lovers love doth more torment
> Than such as in their bondage feel content.
> Lo, I confess, I am thy captive, I,
> And hold my conquered hands for thee to tie.
> [17–20]

Here's a sample from Elegia V (p. 118):

> How smooth a belly under her waist saw I,
> How large a leg, and what a lusty thigh!
> To leave the rest, all liked me passing well;
> I clinged her naked body, down she fell.
> Judge you the rest: being tired she bade me kiss;
> Jove send me more such afternoons as this.
> [21–27]

Marlowe translates Ovid's interesting comment on prostitution in Elegia X (p. 128):

> Only a woman gets spoils from a man,
> Farms out herself on nights for what she can,
> And lets what both delight, what both desire,
> Making her joy according to her hire.
> The sport being such as both alike sweet try it,
> Why should one sell it and the other buy it?
> [29–34]

Marlowe also repeated a theme one finds later in the Sonnets attributed to Shakespeare:

> In verse to praise kind wenches 'tis my part,
> And whom I eternize by my art.
> Garments do wear, jewels and gold do waste,
> The fame that verse gives doth for ever last.
> [59–62]

> Thy scope is mortal, mine eternal fame,
> That all the world may ever chant my name.
> [Elegia XV: 7–8]

> Therefore when flint and iron wear away,
> Verse is immortal, and shall ne'er decay.
> [31–32]

> The suffering ploughshare or the flint may wear,
> But heavenly poesy no death can fear.
> [p. 136: 32–33]

On the subject of sexual arousal Marlowe wrote (Book II, Elegia IV):

> If any eye me with a modest look,
> I burn, and by that blushful glance am took.
> [11–12]

That line reminds us of the most famous lines of all from *Hero and Leander* (Sestiad I, pp. 21–22):

> It lies not in our power to love or hate,
> For will in us is overruled by fate.
> When two are stripped, long ere the course begin

We wish that one should lose, the other win;
And one especially do we affect
Of two gold ingots like in each respect.
The reason no man knows: let it suffice,
What we behold is censured by our eyes.
Where both deliberate, the love is slight;
Who ever loved, that loved not at first sight?
[167–176]

That last line is probably Marlowe's best known. It clearly demonstrates Marlowe's all-consuming interest in the subject of love and sex. He even approached the pornographic in Book III, Elegia VI, when he wrote:

Nay more, the wench did not disdain a whit
To take it in her hand and play with it,
But when she saw it would by no means stand,
But still drooped down, regarding not her hand,
"Why mock'st thou me," she cried, "or being ill,
Who bade thee lie down here against thy will?
Either th' art witched with blood of frogs new dead,
Or jaded cam'st thou from some other's bed."
[73–80]

One can imagine the raging libido that young Marlowe lived with at Cambridge. And certainly he was not the only one among the students who had the same problem. But from his poetry we gather the depth of his interest in love and lust, all the while preparing himself for a life in Holy Orders. With the idea of gaining lasting fame as a poet, we can surmise that Marlowe was willing to bide his time at Cambridge, doing the studies required of him while also translating Ovid, and thinking of the first play he was to write.

5

The Cambridge Experience

For Christopher Marlowe life at Cambridge consisted of more than just prayers, lectures, and required studies. It also inevitably meant getting to know many new people. Thomas Nashe (1567–1601) was in residence from 1582 to 1586. Nashe was later to collaborate with Marlowe in the writing of, *Dido, Queen of Carthage*. Also in residence was Robert Greene (1558–92), who got his B.A. in 1580, obtained an M.A. in 1584. He went on to write short romantic novels and pseudo-historical plays. Another resident at Cambridge at the time was Robert Cecil, crippled son of Lord Burghley (1520–98), the Lord Treasurer of England and Chancellor of the University. Burghley had probably known Marlowe since his days as a page to Philip Sidney.

Then there was Gabriel Harvey (1545–1630), renowned as a rhetorician and orator, and friend of poet Edmund Spencer, who had been at the University a decade before. A pompous pedant if there ever was one, Harvey was known at court and stood high in the esteem of Cambridge's intellectual and theological leaders. As a literary critic, he had his own ideas about English poetry: it should follow classical prosody, preferring the hexameter. He thought he could influence the author of *The Fairie Queene* to abandon his smoothly cadenced, rhyming stanzas for the hexameter. But Spenser kept to his own style, rejecting his friend's influence.

Harvey was so impressed with his own importance and his friendship with Spencer that he actually published a little book of their correspondence, aptly titled: *Three Proper, and wittie, familiar Letters: lately passed between two Universitie men: touching the Earthquake in Aprill last, and our English reformed Versifying.*

In later years, Harvey was to become a bitter opponent of Thomas Nashe. Elizabethan England was a small world, and the literary elite an even smaller one. As for Marlowe, he was anything but a gentle, unassuming poet like Spenser. He burned with ambition and the desire for fame. And he achieved it in the only way a cobbler's son could, by sheer brilliance in writing.

The University reflected the social divisions of the time. According to A.D. Wraight (*In Search of Christopher Marlowe*) (p. 58):

There were three classes of students in Marlowe's day. The first were fellow-commoners (the sons of gentry); next came the "pensioners," of which Marlowe was one and lucky to be so as a mere tradesman's son, for these were usually in the third class, the poor "sizars," whose task it was to act as "fags" cleaning boots, rousting their masters in time for prayers and waiting on them at high table. It was compulsory to attend evensong in the chapel before supper in Hall at seven P.M. This was "not much better than the dinner" of a pottage of salted beef and oatmeal. Entries in the buttery books show that Kit frequently betook himself to the buttery bar for a snack to eke out this meagre fare, and fortunately he seems to have been able to afford it.

At Corpus Christi, Marlowe found himself in a rather young heterogeneous community. Although he was a good two years older than most in his year, others nearing the end of their six years of study would have been his seniors. The college had just passed through a period of great expansion, almost tripling its numbers from a decade before. There were ninety members, thirteen of these being Fellows, twenty scholars, four Bible-clerks, and fifty-four in the student body of fellow commoners, pensioners, and sizars. To make room for all of these people, every nook and cranny of the College was used. Attics were furnished, Marlowe's room was a converted store-room; and the Fellows in the first-floor rooms in the Old Court had to share their chambers with one or two students.

Another resident was Francis Kett, who had been a Fellow from 1573 to 1580. He was still at Corpus Christi for a short while after Marlowe was admitted. He would be burned at the stake eight years later for holding heretical opinions. There is no evidence that Marlowe got to know Kett or was influenced by his unorthodox views. But there is no doubt that Marlowe's views on religion underwent radical change while he was at Cambridge.

Kett was a fanatic who went to his fiery death, leaping and dancing, clapping his hands and crying "blessed be God" until he was stifled with smoke. Religion was a controversial, if not dangerous, subject in England and particularly at Cambridge where the Catholic-Protestant conflict was a subsurface preoccupation.

After the death of Mary Tudor and the end of Catholic persecution of Protestants, the latter were determined to never permit the Catholics to rule England again. The Catholics, of course, were equally determined to bring England back into the Papal fold. They placed their hopes on bringing Catholic Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, to England to replace Elizabeth.

But their plans were thwarted by three brilliant members of Elizabeth's government: William Cecil, who later became Lord Burghley, Francis Walsingham who set up Elizabeth's secret service, and to a lesser extent Nicholas Bacon, father of Anthony and Francis Bacon. All three would touch Marlowe's life one way or another.

William Cecil (1520–1598) was of Welsh origin. In 1535 he entered St. John's College at Cambridge where he studied under the famed professor John Cheke and came under Protestant influence. It was in 1517 that Luther had launched the Reformation. And in Geneva, John Calvin had recently completed his

Institutes of the Christian Religion in 1536, which became the Protestant handbook for reformers.

Cecil's father had acquired his status by serving the Tudors as groom of the wardrobe, and young William adopted his father's loyalty by serving as a page of the robes at court. Thus, very early in life, Cecil was rubbing shoulders with the most powerful men in the court of Henry VIII.

In 1541, Cecil married the professor's sister, Mary Cheke, who died two years later, leaving him with a son. He left Cambridge in 1541 and began his legal studies at Gray's Inn. In 1542, for defending royal policy, he was rewarded by Henry VIII with a place in the Court of Common Pleas. A year later he first entered Parliament. Through his second marriage to the learned and pious Mildred Cooke in 1545, he joined an influential Protestant circle at court.

After Henry's death, Burghley served under the boy king Edward VI as secretary of state. He was knighted in 1551. But two years later, when Catholic Mary Tudor became Queen, he went into retirement. By keeping a low profile and yet showing loyalty to a Tudor Queen, he could survive while Protestants were being burned at the stake or going into exile. Almost 300 Protestant martyrs were put to death under Bloody Mary.

With Mary's death in 1558, Burghley was at once sworn in as a minister by Queen Elizabeth. He was Secretary of State from 1558 to 1572, after which he became Lord Treasurer. Although he disliked war, he favored and organized direct action in Scotland to end French domination there. The result was the Treaty of Edinburgh which paved the way for the eventual union between Scotland and England.

In 1587 Burghley brought the long drawn-out crisis over the fate of Mary, Queen of Scots, to an end by dispatching the signed execution warrant speedily, to forestall any last minute change of mind by Elizabeth. He knew that as long as Mary Stuart lived, Elizabeth would never be safe from assassination.

As chancellor of the University of Cambridge from 1559, Burghley influenced discipline rather than the curriculum, but he made his household a resort of scholars and an educational center for the Queen's wards and the young aristocracy.

Sir Francis Walsingham (1530–1590) was second only to Lord Burghley in contributing to the success of Elizabeth's domestic and foreign policies. The son of a prosperous lawyer in Kent, he studied at King's College, Cambridge, for two years beginning in 1548, but did not take a degree. He traveled abroad for two years, returned to London and soon left England as a Protestant exile from Queen Mary's counterreformation.

Walsingham's two trips abroad in the 1550s epitomize his entire career. The foundation in politics and languages laid during the first trip served him well when he undertook the conduct of Elizabeth's foreign affairs and the management of a secret service essential to England's survival. The second stay on the Continent affirmed his strong Protestant commitment. Like many of the Marian Exiles, he absorbed the advanced Protestant doctrines of Calvinism; unlike most of them, he attained high political office.

Walsingham was admitted to the bar in 1552, and in 1563 he obtained his first seat in Parliament. William Cecil (Lord Burghley), the principal secretary, recognized the potential of Walsingham and helped him climb the career ladder in Elizabeth's government. From 1568 to 1570 Walsingham was employed in obtaining information on the activities of foreign agents in London. From 1570 to 1573 he served as ambassador to the French court. He was in Paris when the horrible St. Bartholomew's Day massacre of Protestant Huguenots took place. That strengthened his determination to do all in his power to prevent the Catholics from ever coming back to power in England.

In the two decades following 1570, when Protestant England's survival was threatened by external invasion from Spain and internal subversion by Jesuit missionaries working with a radical fringe of English Catholics, Walsingham's espionage network on the Continent and his secret-service surveillance of Roman Catholics at home was vital. He recruited some of the brightest students and graduates of Oxford and Cambridge to work as spies. He helped develop highly sophisticated tools for espionage, particularly in the making and breaking of codes.

Until 1587, the main hope of the papacy and Spain lay in the possibility that Elizabeth might be assassinated by conspirators or deposed by a Catholic uprising, thus placing the deposed Catholic, Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, on the throne. Walsingham and his agents frustrated these plans via the famous Babington plot which established the complicity of Mary, who had been held as Elizabeth's prisoner since 1568. It was Walsingham who supplied the evidence against Mary, and he and Lord Burghley finally convinced Elizabeth to sign Mary's death warrant in February 1587.

Walsingham also used his position to aid the Puritans in the English Church who felt that the Reformation had not gone far enough. The harsh treatment of Puritans by Archbishop John Whitgift in the 1590s, after Walsingham's death, testified to how effectively the secretary had shielded them from Elizabeth's distaste and her prelate's wrath. Although a staunch Puritan, Walsingham was also a patron of scholars and literary men, but he had no use for drama.

Walsingham was married three times. His daughter Frances had three husbands, including Sir Philip Sidney, the great poet, who died in 1586, and Robert Devereux, the 2nd Earl of Essex, who was executed by Elizabeth in 1601.

The third man on the team protecting Elizabeth was Sir Nicholas Bacon (1510–1579), father of Anthony and Francis Bacon. He was admitted to the bar in 1533 and made attorney of the court of wards and liveries. He married the strongly Protestant Anne Cooke, sister of Mildred Cooke, who became the wife of Lord Burghley. Thus, the two men were brothers-in-law. Despite his known Protestant sympathies, Bacon managed to retain his office during the reign of Catholic Mary (1553–58).

Upon the accession of Elizabeth, Bacon was made Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, in which capacity he began to exercise the full judicial authority of Lord Chancellor in January 1559. In this position he worked with Burghley to maintain the relatively moderate Protestantism of the Elizabethan church.

Nicholas Bacon's son Anthony entered the secret service under Walsingham in 1579. After the latter died in 1590, Anthony became chief agent for the Earl of Essex, gathering intelligence for both the Earl and Burghley, his uncle. It was Anthony who would play a significant role in the events leading to Marlowe's predicament in 1593.

Another important resident at Cambridge during Marlowe's time was the young Earl of Southampton, the patron to whom the long poem, *Venus and Adonis*, would be dedicated in 1593, the first work with William Shakespeare's name on it. The earl's eccentric father had died in 1581 at the age of 36, leaving his 8-year-old son without the love and care of a father. And so, he was taken into wardship by none other than Lord Burghley who saw in the young, very wealthy heir a nobleman who had to be brought up in the proper manner and given a good education. He also saw in the young earl a potential husband for one of his granddaughters.

Lord Burghley was a strong believer in education. As a loyal Cambridge alumnus, he sent many young peers who were his wards, as well as his own sons, to the university. He always considered St. John's College to be his "nurse," where as a youth he had paid the bellman to wake him at four in the morning and had made profitable use of his studies. Now in the autumn of 1585, he arranged for his ward to enter his old college. At 12 years of age, the boy Earl was admitted as a Fellow-commoner on October 16 and matriculated as a member of the university on December 11. Marlowe had entered in 1580, but would not leave until 1587. Thus, the times of Marlowe and Southampton overlapped. Indeed, Burghley may have had Marlowe tutor the young nobleman.

According to A.L. Rowse's biography of Southampton, the young Earl remained at Cambridge for the next four years (1585–1589). The experience had a strong impact on his intellectual development. It gave him the foundation of an educated man. Thus, with the aesthetic tastes of his mother's family, he was inclined toward literature. He became fond of books and writers, and put much importance in being regarded as a patron of literature. Later in life he showed his gratitude toward St. John's by his substantial gift of manuscripts and books which became the chief glory of the college library.

Did Marlowe and the Earl ever become friends at Cambridge? By 1585, Marlowe had written the Ovid *Elegies*, Lucan's *Pharsalia*, and perhaps his first play, *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, and some of *Tamburlaine*, with which he would burst forth on the scene in London as a playwright. Were any of his writings circulated among his fellow students? It is not unusual for a budding writer to seek the reaction of his friends to something he has written. The Earl of Southampton may have seemed rather young to Marlowe at the time, but a cobbler's son may have found it worth while to get to know the young Earl if only to think of him as a possible future patron.

6

Marlowe's Early Works

Biographers and scholars agree that Marlowe wrote his earliest works while a student at Corpus Christi. The translation of Ovid's *Elegies* is considered his first work, followed by the translation of the first book of Lucan's *Pharsalia* and subsequently by the first draft of *Dido, Queen of Carthage.* Marlowe's love of Ovid probably began back at the King's School where he might have had access to Headmaster Gresshop's copy of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* with its erotic illustrations. What teen-age boy would not be so impressed, particularly one of such literary talent as the young Marlowe?

Marlowe must have felt a keen affinity for the Roman poet who was born in 43 B.C. and died in exile in A.D. 18, having been banished from Rome by Emperor Augustus. Ovid's love of beauty and of nature was to be found in everything he wrote, and that same sense of beauty was to be found in Marlowe's work. And if that is the case, shouldn't that same love of Ovid be found in the works of Shakespeare if Marlowe was indeed their true author? In fact, A. L. Rowse writes in his biography of Shakespeare, in which he tried to construct an education for his hero out of thin air: "In the upper school he went on to Ovid, and this was the love of his life among Latin poets."

It is highly improbable that the lascivious Ovid would have been taught in any school Shakespeare attended. Marlowe's translation of Ovid was undoubtedly undertaken as a private exercise in sensuality, which he might have shared with several of his classmates.

Joseph Sobran, in his book on the Oxford theory, *Alias Shakespeare*, writes (p. 111): "Shakespeare echoes Ovid so often that Francis Meres suggested the Roman's soul had transmigrated into the English poet." Sobran further comments (p. 178):

> Shakespeare's favorite classical poet is not Virgil, however, but Ovid. It is a commonplace of scholarship that he draws on the *Metamorphoses* in both the original Latin and Arthur Golding's translation. *Venus and Adonis* is drawn from *Metamorphoses, The Rape of Lucrece* from Ovid's *Fasti.*

But it was Ovid's complete emancipation from all moral restraints that eventually led to his downfall. His *Ars Amatoria (Art of Love)* was considered the most immoral work ever written by a man of genius.

U.M. Ellis-Fermor writes (p. 10): "Marlowe's choice of theme in the *Elegies* suggests that this work attracted him as an escape from the rigid life of an Elizabethan student. ... In the *Elegies* of Ovid he found part of what he sought — a full and irresponsible love of life — just as in his other early translation, the first of the *Pharsalia,* he found a partial expression of his thirst for sovereignty and love of arms."

What is particularly interesting about Lucan's *Pharsalia* is that Marlowe wrote it in blank verse, an innovation that was noted as a great creative advance in play writing. Also, the subject of this extraordinary poem was civil war, in marked contrast to the erotic themes in the *Elegies.* Apparently, unlike the surreptitious *Elegies,* this translation was one that he could show his professors as an example of his competence with Latin. And the subject had relevance to what was going on in England. The war between Caesar and Pompey could be seen as a prototype of the struggle between Elizabeth and Mary Stuart.

Some of the lines exquisitely express the irony of Rome's political fate:

> Rome, if thou take delight in impious war,
> First conquer all the earth, then turn thy forces
> Against thyself: as yet thou wants not foes.
> [21–23]

> Rome was so great it could not bear itself.
> So when this world's confounded union breaks,
> Time ends, and to old Chaos all things turn ...
> [73–75]

And then we get this very salient bit of political philosophy that sums up exactly what the problem was between Elizabeth and Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, a view that must have pleased Lord Burghley had he read the poem: "Dominion cannot suffer partnership" (93).

There is also an interesting set of lines depicting pagan practices and beliefs:

> And you, French Bardi, whose immortal pens
> Renown the valiant souls slain in your wars,
> Sit safe at home and chant sweet poesy.
> And, Druides, you now in peace renew
> Your barbarous customs and sinister rites;
> In unfelled woods and sacred groves you dwell,
> And only gods and heavenly powers you know,
> Or only know you nothing. For you hold
> That souls pass not to silent Erebus
> Or Pluto's bloodless kingdom, but elsewhere
> Resume a body; so (if truth you sing)
> Death brings long life. Doubtless these northern men,
> Whom death, the greatest of all fears, affright not,

Are blest by such sweet error; this makes them
Run on the sword's point and desire to die,
And shame to spare life which being lost is won.
[443–458]

What Marlowe found in Lucan's *Pharsalia* was the political violence he saw around him in Elizabethan England. And it prepared him for the violence in *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, and *Tamburlaine*, which he began to write before leaving Cambridge.

It is generally acknowledged that *Dido* was Marlowe's first play and that it was written while he was still a 21-year-old student at Cambridge in the years 1585–86. So much of the education he got was in the classics. F.S. Boas has shown how memories of lines from Ovid appear in nearly everything Marlowe wrote. His classical allusions come mainly from the Roman poet, and his mind was filled with memorized phrases from Ovid's poetry. As a student preparing for Holy Orders, he knew the Bible as well as he knew the classics, and in their contrast he found his own way.

But it was Virgil's *Aeneid*, particularly Books I, II and IV that provided Marlowe with an exciting, dramatic subject for his first play. H. J. Oliver writes in his introduction to *Dido Queen of Carthage* (p. xxxvi): "Working from the Latin text, Marlowe sometimes translated, (often brilliantly), sometimes paraphrased, sometimes summarized. He also often rearranged, or altered the emphasis; and sometimes he invented." He already knew how to take an original epic that was generally known to Elizabethan theatergoers and adapt it in a way to produce the effects he wished to make on the stage.

The story is of the fall of Troy and the escape of Aeneas and a group of his followers by ship from the city, which has been destroyed by the Greeks. While on the way to Italy, the ship is wrecked on the shores of Carthage. Dido, the Queen, welcomes Aeneas with open arms and falls desperately in love with him. He is determined to repair his ship and sail on to Italy. But Dido begs him to stay. After agreeing to stay, he changes his mind and finally leaves. Dido then kills herself.

That's the bare outline of a much more complicated plot which includes the machinations of gods and goddesses, a few other characters, and several subplots. The play opens with a delightful scene in which Jupiter has his young lover Ganymede on his knee, and Ganymede complains of how badly treated he's been by Jupiter's sister Juno. Their conversation leads to Jupiter's promise to put Juno in her place. He then asks Ganymede what kind of a present he would like. The adolescent lover replies with typical teenage greed:

I would have a jewel for mine ear,
And a fine brooch to put in my hat,
And then I'll hug with you an hundred times.
[46–48]

Venus enters and addresses Jupiter:

Ay, this is it; you can sit toying there,
And playing with that female wanton boy,
Whiles my Aeneas wanders on the seas,
And rests a prey to every billow's pride.
[50–53]

Jupiter agrees to help and manages to bring Aeneas' ships to the Carthage shore. Venus witnesses her son's arrival but does not make herself known. Aeneas is then brought to Queen Dido's court where he and his son are cordially welcomed and put at ease. Dido then asks Aeneas:

May I entreat thee to discourse at large,
And truly too, how Troy was overcome?
[2.1. 106–107]

What follows, of course, is the harrowing tale of the entry of the Trojan Horse into Troy and the massacre that ensued. Particularly graphic is Aeneas's description of the murder of King Priam by blood-thirsty Pyrrhus:

At last came Pyrrhus, fell and full of ire,
His harness dropping blood, and on his spear
The mangled head of Priam's youngest son,
And after him his band of Myrmidons,
With balls of wildfire in their murdering paws,
Which made the funeral flame that burnt fair Troy;
[2.1. 213–218]

My mother Venus, jealous of my health,
Convey'd me from their crooked nets and bands;
So I escap'd the furious Pyrrhus' wrath;
Who then ran to the palace of the King,
And at Jove's altar finding Priamus,
About whose wither'd neck hung Hecuba,
Folding his hand in hers, and jointly both
Beating their breasts and falling on the ground,
He, with his falchion's point raised up at once,
And with Megaera's eyes, stared in their face,
Threat'ning a thousand deaths at every glance;
To whom the aged King thus trembling spoke:
"Achilles' son, remember what I was:
Father of fifty sons, but they are slain;
Lord of my fortune, but my fortune's turn'd;
King of this city, but my Troy is fired —
And now am neither father, lord, nor king.
Yet who so wretched but desires to live?
O let me live, great Neoptolemus!"
Not mov'd at all, but smiling at his tears,
This butcher, whilst his hands were yet held up,
Treading upon his breast, struck off his hands.

Dido. O end, Aeneas, I can hear no more!

At which the frantic Queen leap'd on his face,
And in his eyelids hanging by the nails,
A little while prolong'd her husband's life.
At last, the soldiers pull'd her by the heels,
And swung her howling in the empty air,
Which sent an echo to the wounded King;
Whereat he lifted up his bed-rid limbs,
And would have grappled with Achilles' son,
Forgetting both his want of strength and hands:
Which he disdaining whisk'd his sword about,
And with the wound thereof the King fell down.
Then from the navel to the throat at once
He ripp'd old Priam; at whose latter gasp
Jove's marble statue gan to bend the brow
As loathing Pyrrhus for this wicked act.
[2.1. 221–258]

The reason why we've quoted this lengthy excerpt from the play is because of what we find in *Hamlet* some years later. In Act 2, Scene 2, Hamlet welcomes a troupe of players who will act in the play that will catch his uncle. He asks the players to give him a sample of their talents. They ask him what would he like to hear. Hamlet speaks:

I heard thee speak me a speech once, but it was never acted, or if it was, not above once, for the play, I remember, pleased not the million; 'twas caviary to the general: but it was—as I received it, and others, whose judgments in such matters cried in the top of mine—an excellent play, well digested in the scenes, set down with as much modesty as cunning. I remember one said there were no sallets in the lines to make the matter savoury, nor no matter in the phrase that might indict the author of affectation, but called it an honest method, as wholesome as sweet, and by very much more handsome than fine. One speech in't I chiefly loved. 'Twas Aeneas' tale to Dido, and thereabout of it especially where he speaks of Priam's slaughter. If it live in your memory, begin at this line—let me see, let me see:

"'The rugged Pyrrhus, like th' Hyrcanian beast—"

'Tis not so; it begins with Pyrrhus:

"'The rugged Pyrrhus, he whose sable arms,
Black as his purpose, did the night resemble
When he lay couched in the ominous horse,
Hath now this dread and black complexion smeared
With heraldry more dismal. Head to foot
Now is he total gules, horridly tricked
With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons
Baked and impasted with the parching streets,
That lend a tyrannous and a damned light
To their lord's murther. Roasted in wrath and fire,
And thus o'ersized with coagulate gone,
With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus
Old grandsire Priam seeks."

So, proceed you.

[2.2. 454–487]

The player then proceeds to deliver an emotive monologue of about 45 lines depicting the slaying of Priam and Hecuba by Pyrrhus. It is a broad parody of the lines in Marlowe's *Dido*. But some lines come awfully close to Marlowe's original. Marlowe wrote:

> Which he disdaining whisk'd his sword about
> And with the wound thereof the King fell down.
> [2.1. 253–254]

The author of *Hamlet* wrote:

> Pyrrhus at Priam drives, in rage strikes wide,
> But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword
> Th' unnerved father falls.
> [2.2. 494–496]

Many Shakespeare scholars have commented on Hamlet's lengthy allusion to and paraphrasing of *Dido*. They generally assume that Shakespeare had access to the play, had read it, or seen it. It was published in 1594 and *Hamlet* was written in about 1600 or 1601. But it is odd indeed for one playwright to make so extensive use of another playwright's work.

Indeed, the scene in *Hamlet* can be read on many levels. If, however, you believe that Marlowe wrote *Hamlet* and inserted a portion of *Dido* very cleverly into a play about a Danish prince — who might have seen the play performed by a traveling English troupe in Denmark or seen it on a theatergoing junket to London — then the reference to *Dido* becomes one of the many clues that Marlowe put in so many of the plays that point to him as the true author.

Also, he may have inserted the reference to *Dido* in order to stimulate interest in the play — giving it a plug — since Hamlet calls it an "excellent play, well digested in the scenes, set down with as much modesty as cunning." These days a statement like that would be considered a rave review.

7

Marlowe and the Secret Service

In 1584, at the age of 20, Marlowe received his Bachelor of Arts degree, and it is at about this time that he was recruited into Her Majesty's Secret Service. We don't know the exact circumstances of his recruitment, but obviously Lord Burghley had his agents looking out for possible candidates. What we do know is that there was a strong Catholic presence at the university since some of the students had been born and reared as Catholics, and that both Lord Burghley and Sir Francis Walsingham had good reason to be concerned about Catholic subversion at their old Alma Mater. Charles Nicholl writes in *The Reckoning* (p. 96):

> As early as 1581, during Marlowe's first year at the university, the [English Catholic] seminary [at Rheims] had established a recruitment network at the university. This was one of the achievements of the first Jesuit missions to England, spearheaded by Edmund Campion and Robert Persons. In September 1581, Persons reported to Claudius Acquaviva, the General of the Jesuits at Rome:
>
> > At Cambridge I have at length insinuated a certain priest into the very university, under the guise of a scholar or gentleman commoner, and have procured him help not far from the town. Within a few months he has sent over to Rheims seven very fit youths.

And so, this invisible Catholic subversion at the university, as Burghley and Walsingham suspected, was very real and had to be dealt with. Thus, Walshingham, master of the infiltration technique and employer of *agents provocateurs*, searched for potential government spies among the Protestant students at Cambridge. Where better to find them than at Corpus Christi, where students were being prepared to enter Protestant Holy Orders and had a strong theological commitment to the Reformation.

It is very likely that when Marlowe was recruited into the service he fell under the guidance of a control, that is, a seasoned and experienced member who would teach him the ropes and give him his instructions from Sir Francis.

Who was that control? It could have been Thomas Walsingham, cousin of Sir Francis, who since 1581 had been a courier, conveying letters from the English ambassador in Paris to the Queen in London. It could have been Thomas Watson, the poet, who shared rooms with Thomas Walsingham in Paris and was also working in the secret service. Or it could have been Robert Poley, a Cambridge alumnus and ten years Marlowe's senior, who became Walsingham's chief double-agent working among the Babington plotters. He was known among Catholics as Walsingham's most capable spy, an expert in double-dealing, a well-experienced informer, and a very clever *agent provocateur.*

Being recruited into the Secret Service meant not only new and interesting connections for Marlowe, but extra spending money. Since Marlowe had forsaken his career in Holy Orders for one as a playwright, the need for a source of income was probably one of the reasons why he willingly entered the secret service. Also, it brought him into contact with Thomas Walsingham, a year older than he, who later became his patron and benefactor. In short, by entering the secret service Marlowe also entered a new world of people of influence dealing with the highest policies of government.

Marlowe's first assignment was to go to the English Catholic seminary at Rheims. The College had been founded by English Catholic exiles in 1568 at Douai, Flanders, but due to political unsettlement moved to Rheims. There, politically protected by the Duke of Guise and financially supported by the Vatican, the seminary prospered. It became a rallying point for Catholic Englishmen from all social classes, including students from Cambridge and Oxford. It became a training ground for militant Catholics who returned to England to further efforts to return England to the Catholic church.

Charles Nicholl writes (p. 121):

> Rheims was high on Walsingham's French agenda. The purpose of his operations against the seminary can be summed up as two-fold. The first was intelligence: to gather details of Catholic strategy, both military and political, and to get advance warning of priests intending to enter England. The second was sabotage: to sow faction and disunity in the very heart of the Catholic mission....
>
> Life at the seminary was frugal and scholarly. ... The seminarists wore black gowns and tricorn hats, attended divinity lectures, subsisted on simple fare—dinner was a 'little broth, thickened merely with the commonest roots'—and contemplated the murals of blessed martyrdom painted on their chamber-walls. It was an intensely tight-knit community. These were young men a long way from home, surrounded by hostile locals, and steeped in a fanatical ideal of devotion and sacrifice: 'soldiers of Christ.'

What was Marlowe's mission at Rheims? It is believed that he went there primarily to deliver a message to Gilbert Gifford, one of Walsingham's double-agents at the seminary. Gifford was a key player in the Babington plot in that he was able to persuade fellow seminarist John Savage to join the conspirators and take an oath to kill Queen Elizabeth. Marlowe arrived at Rheims in July of 1585 and returned to Corpus Christi in the fall. He no doubt found easy access to the seminary, which was happy to welcome any student from Cambridge interested

in becoming a Catholic, and Marlowe no doubt gave the impression that he was considering conversion or had already converted.

He probably stayed long enough to gather the information from Gifford that Walsingham wanted and to make other useful observations. As a budding playwright he eagerly absorbed the sights and sounds and characters he encountered. He could also practice his French on the locals in town. And as a secret agent he was learning how to skillfully deceive and dissimulate.

Was Marlowe sent on other missions? We can only speculate by considering his absences from Cambridge during the years 1584 to 1587. Between his arrival in December 1580 and his graduation as Bachelor of Arts in April 1584, there is no record of absence. However, during the academic year of 1584–85, Marlowe received less than half the scholarship payment due him, indicating two prolonged periods of absence in 1585: the first of eight weeks from the middle of April until mid-June; the second, a nine-week absence from July to September. This last period accounts for the time he went to Rheims.

However, even though he had received less of his scholarship money, he was receiving remuneration from the government for his work in the secret service. In 1585, Marlowe's spending at the Corpus Christi buttery increased considerably, indicating that he was beginning to enjoy his newly gained prosperity. Indeed, it is in 1585 that the famous portrait believed to be of Marlowe was painted with its mysterious motto: *Quod me nutrit me destruit.* (That which nourishes me, destroys me.) It was the portrait of the young man as poet and playwright, not the pursuer of Holy Orders. No doubt he was also working on his great play, *Tamburlaine,* which would launch his career in London in 1587.

In November 1585, Marlowe visited his family in Canterbury where he witnessed the drafting of a neighbor's will. He read the text of the will out loud to the assembled company, which included his father, uncle, and brother-in-law. This will, discovered in 1939 in the archives of Canterbury, contains the only known specimen of Marlowe's signature.

Marlowe was also absent from Corpus Christi for nine weeks in April, May and June of 1586. We can only speculate that he was performing some sort of work for Walsingham.

8

The Babington Plot

You have to know something about the Babington Plot in order to understand not only the conspiratorial nature of Elizabethan politics but also to understand the centuries old struggle between Catholics and Protestants in the English-speaking world, which may finally end in Northern Ireland. The Puritans brought that same state of mind to the new world when they settled New England in the early 1600s. Although Marlowe had performed his small part in the ensuing drama, he was also preparing himself to take the London stage by storm with *Tamburlaine.*

In a sense, the plot was the inspiration of Walsingham and Burghley who wanted, once and for all, to free England of the possibility of a Catholic return to power. They did not want another Bloody Mary with hundreds of martyrs burned at the stake. This meant getting rid of Mary Stuart whom the Pope had proclaimed as the rightful Queen of England. He had excommunicated Elizabeth in 1570 by way of a Papal Bull that absolved Elizabeth's subjects from their allegiance to the Protestant sovereign, an obvious incitement to rebellion. Thus, from 1585 to February 8, 1587, when Mary was finally executed, all of Walsingham's energies and resources were devoted to ending the threat to Elizabeth as well as to Walsingham, Burghley and other Protestant leaders who would be hanged if not burned alive if the conspirators won. It should be recalled that Walsingham was in Paris in August 1572 during the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre of the Huguenots, led by the Guises, to whom Mary Stuart was closely related. It was an event that one was unlikely to forget.

The problem with the Queen of Scots began in 1568 when Mary fled to England after abdicating the throne in Scotland. She had been accused of complicity in the murder of her husband. In England she was held at a castle far distant from London. After lengthy consultation with Cecil (Lord Burghley) and the Scottish opposition to Mary, Elizabeth decided to imprison her. There was always the possibility that Catholic Mary might succeed Elizabeth should the latter die unexpectedly. While Mary Stuart had a much pleasanter disposition than Mary Tudor, it was her future militant followers who were to be feared.

The "plot" began in March 1586 at a meeting at the Plough Inn, outside Temple Bar in London. Present were Robert Barnwell, an Irishman, Harry Dunne, a young Kentish gentleman, Chidiock Tichbourne, a poet. These were minor players. The two men at the core of the plot were Anthony Babington and John Ballard. Babington was a charming, 24-year-old lawyer, son of a rich squire, who had studied law at Lincoln's Inn. As a devout Catholic, he had developed at an early age a fierce loyalty to Mary Queen of Scots. He served as a courier conveying messages from Thomas Morgan to Queen Mary. Morgan, a Welsh Catholic and a master of intrigue, was Mary's agent in charge of communication between her and her supporters in France. However, Elizabeth had banned correspondence between Mary and her followers. In any case, by 1586 Babington had ceased to be a courier. He was thinking of going into exile on the Continent. He and a friend had tried to get passports but to no avail. Thus, from the very beginning he was not the strongest supporter of the plot.

The real animus behind the conspiracy was Father John Ballard, a militant priest and a missionary Catholic from Rheims. He wore a stylish secular disguise and used the name "Captain Fortescue" to detract from his true identity. His inseparable companion was one Barnard Maude, who had connections in high places and was able to get the two of them false passports to facilitate their crossing over to France. Ballard's purpose in France was to confer with Morgan and other English Catholic exiles in Paris and with the Spanish ambassador, Don Bernadino de Mendoza. The project was the long-awaited Catholic invasion of England.

Whatever was discussed at the Plough meeting would soon be known to Walsingham, for Ballard's right-hand man, Barnard Maude, the "fixer" as he was called, was one of Walsingham's own agents.

In May 1586, Ballard returned from France and went immediately to Babington's lodgings to tell the young lawyer the exciting news. The invasion of England was a done deal. It would take place in the summer, by September at the latest. A strike force of 60,000 soldiers were in preparation, French troops under the Duke of Guise, and Italian and Spanish troops under the Duke of Parma. What was needed was a plan for the home front: an uprising of English Catholics to act in concert with the invasion.

However, in order for the invasion to succeed, the removal of Elizabeth was an absolute precondition. The people could not be counted on to rise up if Queen Elizabeth was still on the throne. Ballard then told Babington that they had a willing assassin: John Savage, who had vowed to perform the bloody act.

Shortly after this, Savage visited Babington, having returned to England from Rheims. He was now reading law at Barnard's Inn but was still pledged to carry out his mission to kill the Queen. Gifford had reminded Savage of his vow.

Babington, appalled at the scope of the conspiracy, began to have second thoughts. There was much discussion among the plotters, two of whom considered the removal of the Queen out of the question. Babington wanted out. He was now more than ever eager to go abroad, but he and Salisbury, his companion,

needed passports. How to get them? It so happened that an acquaintance knew someone with contacts at court, a friend of Catholics. He was an employee of Lady Sidney, daughter of Sir Francis Walsingham, who obviously had access to her father. The employee's name was Robert Poley.

Although Babington knew something of Poley's reputation, he offered him a fee of 300 Pounds if he could obtain the two passports. Poley brought Babington's request to Walsingham. He came back with a very interesting offer: Babington would have to take Poley into his service, pay his expenses, travel with him, and after the travel was over provide Poley with a yearly stipend. Babington agreed. In the last week of June 1586, Poley brought Babington to Greenwich for a personal interview with Walsingham who endeavored to enlist the Catholic lawyer as an informer for the government.

Meanwhile, Walsingham had Barnard Maude providing him with intelligence about Ballard, and Gifford urging John Savage to remain true to his vow. But despite all the help from these agents, Walsingham and Burghley knew that the only way they could indict the Queen of Scots was to have her give assent to the plot in a letter in which she agreed with the removal of Elizabeth. But since Mary was not permitted any correspondence with the outside world, how were they going to get this vitally needed written evidence? Easily, by setting up a clandestine correspondence channel which, unbeknownst to Mary and her supporters, Walsingham would control.

This was done mainly by Walsingham's agents Poley and Gifford. Mail to Mary was sent from Paris to London via diplomatic pouch to the French embassy in London. There the mail piled up since it could not be delivered to Mary. Gifford visited the French ambassador and, as a supporter of Mary, said that he had devised a secret method whereby mail could be delivered to Mary at Chartley where she was being held. It so happened that every Friday a keg of beer was delivered to Mary by a local brewer and an empty keg returned. Mary was led to believe that the brewer was a supporter and would help her. The plan was to put the letters in a waterproof leather sack that could be inserted in the ingoing keg. Outgoing mail would be inserted in the outgoing keg.

Mary was overjoyed by the plan, which now permitted her to reach the outside world. Her letters were written in code. But what she didn't know is that after Gifford retrieved the packet of letters from the brewer, he first delivered them to Walsingham whose very crafty assistant Thomas Phelippes decoded them, then dispatched them to their proper destinations.

Gifford was able to get the pile of letters from the French embassy to Mary via the new secret channel. Among the letters was one from Morgan in Paris in which he officially approved of Babington as a contact. On June 25, Mary wrote a short note to Babington requesting that he convey to her whatever packets of mail he had for her from Paris and Scotland. The letter was conveyed by Gifford to Walshingham, who read it. It reached Babington on July 6. Spurred on by Ballard and Gifford, Babington wrote the letter that was to lead to Mary's fatal, self-incriminating reply.

Charles Nicholl writes (p. 152):

> The letter was long and dangerously specific in its itemisation of the conspiracy's aims. First, to prepare the ground for the Catholic invasion force: "ports to arrive at appointed, with a strong party at every place to join with them." Second, the "deliverance" of Mary from captivity. And third, "the despatch of the usurping competitor," Elizabeth. For this last act, he writes, "there be six noble gentlemen, all my private friends, who for the zeal they bear to the Catholic cause and your Majesty's service, will undertake that tragical execution...."
>
> Babington's letter to Mary was a request for her assent, for legitimisation of the plot: "forasmuch as delay is extreme dangerous, it may please your most excellent Majesty to direct us, and by your princely authority to enable such as may advance us." It was also precisely what Walsingham was waiting for: the point at which this carefully nurtured treason actually touched the Queen of Scots.

Mary received the letter on July 14. It had already been read by Walsingham who now knew about as much about the conspiracy as the plotters themselves. He was eager to see what Queen Mary would write in return. Finally, on July 17, she wrote back to Babington a long letter in which she generally approved of the scheme. She tacitly accepted that part of the conspiracy involving the removal of Elizabeth. But more than anything, she was concerned with her own escape from Elizabeth's imprisonment and believed that foreign help was absolutely necessary for the plan to succeed. Mary had written the letter in French, which her aides translated into English, then ciphered and dispatched through the brewer's pipeline.

The letter was received and read by Walsingham on July 19. But he was not totally satisfied with it. It needed a more direct and explicit approval of Elizabeth's assassination. And so his adept decoder, Phelippes, forged a postscript to the end of the letter, also in cipher, in which Mary was made to ask for the names of the six gentlemen who would perform the deed.

Gifford, knowing that this letter would lead to the arrest of the plotters and endless cross-examinations, decided that his role as *agent provocateur* was at an end and fled to the Continent.

It wasn't until July 29 that Babington received Mary's letter after it had been thoroughly digested and copied by Walsingham and Phelippes. No doubt Burghley also read it or was informed of its contents.

While the noose was tightening around the plotters, Poley spent much time with them. On July 28, he, Babington and Savage dined together at the Castle Inn. And on August 2, Babington and a group of the plotters dined in Poley's garden, a house provided for him by the government. Finally, on August 4, John Ballard was arrested at Poley's garden house. Young Thomas Walsingham was seen conferring with Poley that morning.

On learning of Ballard's arrest, the conspirators scattered, but by August 14 had all been taken into custody. After strenuous interrogation they were all found guilty of high treason and sentenced to death. On September 20, Ballard, Babington, Savage, Barnwell, Tichbourne, Tilney and Abingdon were executed.

Four days after Babington had been arrested, so was Poley, who was committed to the Tower. After his arrival at the Tower, he wrote out his own "confession," a detailed diary of his relationship with Babington from their first meeting in mid-June to their farewell on August 4.

The imprisonment of Poley fooled few Catholics. Nicholl writes (p. 162):

> For [Jesuit Robert] Southwell, there [was] no doubt that the government was responsible for the entire plot: "the matter of Babington was wholly of their plotting and forging, of purpose to make Catholics odious and to cut off the Queen of Scots." Babington and his accomplices were "drawn blindfold to be the workers of their own overthrow." This was why they were allowed to remain free so long: weeks before their apprehension, they were "pointed at in the streets of London, and yet not touched until the matter was brought to that pass to which the Council would have it come." He accuses Walsingham, Leicester and Burghley as the "chief plotters," and Poley as the "chief actor in it here in England."

Poley remained in the Tower for about two years, during which time he practiced his old role of prison informer. Poley was released in 1588, after which Walsingham provided him with permanent employment.

As for the Queen of Scots, a dramatic two-day trial took place on October 15 and 16 of 1586 at Fotheringhay, with Walsingham and Burghley present, after which Mary Stuart was found guilty of treason and sentenced to death. Elizabeth hesitated in signing the warrant for the execution. But eventually she did. The signed warrant was sent speedily to Fotheringhay lest Elizabeth change her mind. The Queen of Scots was beheaded on February 8, 1587, in one of the saddest execution scenes in history. When Elizabeth heard of the execution she was enraged at all of the ministers involved. But in time she realized that what her ministers had done was for her own safety and the safety of England.

Many historians have compared the characters of the two female sovereigns in an attempt to find justification for Mary's execution. But perhaps the most brilliant and incisive observation was made by Algernon Swinburne in the biography he did of Mary Stuart for the Eleventh Edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (vol. 17, p. 823):

> Three months after the massacre of St. Bartholomew had caused some additional restrictions to be placed upon [Mary's] freedom of action, Shrewsbury writes to Burghley that "rather than continue this imprisonment she sticks not to say she will give her body, her son, and country for liberty"; nor did she ever show any excess of regard for any of the three. For her own freedom of will and of way, of passion and of action, she cared much; for her creed she cared something; for her country she cared less than nothing. She would have flung Scotland with England into the hell fire of Spanish Catholicism rather than forgo the faintest chance of personal revenge. ... Elizabeth, so shamefully her inferior in personal loyalty, fidelity and gratitude, was as clearly her superior on the one all-important point of patriotism. The saving salt of Elizabeth's character, with all its wellnigh incredible mixture of heroism and egotism, meanness and magnificence, was simply this, that, overmuch as she loved herself, she did yet love England better.

9

Marlowe Goes to London

With the conclusion of the Babington conspiracy, Marlowe's stay at Cambridge was also about to come to an end. It also meant the finality of the decision not to pursue Holy Orders. A young man of his intelligence and literary skills could have easily become a bishop or even a future Archbishop of Canterbury had he the religious fervor needed to sustain such a career and the ambition to move upward in the clerical hierarchy.

But Marlowe was a member of the younger Elizabethan generation, burning with ambition to astonish the world. The older generation had labored to create a stable, prosperous society, safe from the depredations of Elizabeth's enemies home and abroad. Burghley, Walsingham, Bacon, Leicester, and others had toiled mightily to bring about institutions that would provide political stability and security, yet posed challenges to the younger generation. Elizabeth had the temperament and sense of moderation that permitted Burghley and others to do their work with efficiency and vision. They never underestimated the threats to the kingdom's equilibrium and they enlisted the younger generation in its maintenance.

Marlowe was a beneficiary of the system. Although he was not of the aristocracy, he had the education of an aristocrat and the freedom to do his writing unimpeded. At Cambridge he had the opportunity to make connections. His recruitment into the secret service had brought him to the attention of the two most powerful men in the realm. They valued him because it wasn't often that a young literary genius was available for such service.

But before he could leave the academic cocoon that had nursed and sheltered him for six years, he had to complete his studies for his Master's degree, which would be granted at Commencement in July. And so, on March 31, 1587, Marlowe made his final supplicant at Master and Fellows at Corpus Christi. But the university authorities rejected his supplication because of his absences during the year. Rumors had floated about the university that he had become a secret Catholic because of his stay at the seminary at Rheims. But he could not simply tell the authorities that he had gone there as a spy. No doubt it irked him to

have to prove his loyalty to the state. Obviously, what he needed and what the authorities required was confirmation from the highest levels of government that his absences were in service to the Queen.

Apparently, he got word to Walsingham or Burghley or both about his dilemma. Both statesmen were up to their ears in efforts to counter the fallout from Mary's execution in February of that year and dealing with complicated foreign policy matters that required their urgent attention. In addition, Burghley was suffering from gout. Nevertheless, the Privy Council was able to get a letter off to the university, dated June 29, 1587, which explained the circumstances of Marlowe's absences and his attending the Catholic seminary in Rheims. It stated (in modern spelling) (quoted in Wraight, p. 88):

> Whereas it was reported that Christopher Morley [one of the alternate spellings of Marlowe's name] was determined to have gone behind the seas to Reames and there to remain, Their Lordships thought good to certify that he had no such intent, but that in all his actions he had behaved himself orderly and discretely whereby he had done her Majesty good service, & deserved to be rewarded for his faithful dealing: Their Lordships request was that the rumor thereof should be allaied by all possible means, and that he should be furthered the degree he was to take this next Commencement: Because it was not her Majesty's pleasure that any one employed as he had been in touching the benefit of his Country should be defamed by those that are ignorant in the affairs he went about.

The letter was signed by the Archbishop, the Lord Chancellor, the Lord Treasurer (Burghley), the Lord Chamberlain, and the Lord Comptroler. Burghley, the most powerful statesman in Elizabeth's government, was also Chancellor of Cambridge University. His word was as good as the Queen's.

It goes without saying that Marlowe's prestige among the university authorities was greatly enhanced and that they made sure that the aspiring poet got his Master's degree.

Now, at age 23, Marlowe was ready to make his mark as a playwright. He had completed *Tamburlaine the Great* while still at Corpus Christi, and he was chafing at the bit to get it staged. The theatre in London was thriving and attracting huge audiences and there was an ever urgent need for new, exciting plays. So, when he got to the capital, he went to the newly erected Rose Theatre in Southmark, built by Philip Henslowe and John Chomley. Henslowe bought the play. The role of Tamburlaine was played by Edward Alleyn of the Lord Admiral's company of players. It was an immediate smash hit.

Marlowe's instinct had been correct in choosing this exotic subject for his first big play. Tamburlaine, the Scythian warrior, who had risen from shepherd to conqueror, was larger than life. He was modeled on Timur who in the fourteenth century ruled in Samarkand and subdued Persians, Tartars, Syrians and Turks. Marlowe had done his research on the Middle East by studying Ortelius's map of the region in his atlas. This was the legendary region where Alexander had made his conquests. The audiences loved this marvelous conquering hero of low birth but with a burning lust for power.

With this play, Marlowe had given the stage a new form of blank verse that unleashed his own literary power in a way never before expressed. Thomas Nashe wrote that Marlowe was trying "to outbrave better pens and the swelling bombast of a bragging blank verse and the specious volubility of a drumming decasyllation."

There was another side to *Tamburlaine* that struck a chord with Elizabethan audiences: the play's sheer poetic brilliance. Swinburne wrote about it over 300 years later:

> The first great English poet was the father of English tragedy and the creator of English blank verse. Sublimity is the test of imagination as distinguished from invention or from fancy; and the first English poet whose powers can be called sublime was Christopher Marlowe.
>
> The majestic and exquisite excellence of various lines and passages in Marlowe's first play must be admitted to relieve, if it cannot be allowed to redeem, the stormy monotony of Titanic truculence which blusters like a simoon through the noisy course of its ten fierce acts. With many and heavy faults, there is something of genuine greatness in *Tamburlaine the Great;* and for two grave reasons it must always be remembered with distinction and mentioned with honor. It is the first poem ever written in English blank verse, as distinguished from mere rhymeless decasyllabics; and it contains one of the noblest passages—perhaps, indeed, the noblest in the literature of the world—ever written by one of the greatest masters of poetry in loving praise of the glorious delights and sublime submission to the everlasting limits of his art.
>
> Marlowe is the greatest discoverer, the most daring and inspired pioneer, in all our poetic literature.

There is no doubt that the audiences sensed this greatness in the play they were watching and listening to with rapt attention. Marlowe had had his finger on the pulse of the younger generation of Elizabethans, among whom he had lived for six years at Cambridge. They represented those in the society with the brightest futures and highest aspirations.

An interesting study of this younger generation was published in 1966, *The aspiring mind of the Elizabethan younger generation* by Anthony Esler (Duke University Press). Esler writes:

> The court was the center of the lives of the young gentlemen of Elizabethan England, and the operation of the courtier system their major preoccupation. High aspiration, manifested most commonly as personal ambition, provided the motive force of their careers....
>
> Toward the end of [Elizabeth's] reign, however, the phrase "aspiring mind" acquired a new overlay of associations and emotional significance. In the 1580's and 1590's, there appeared what might be called the Marlovian aspiring mind, the mind of Marlowe's heroes, of Tamburlaine the Great and Doctor Faustus, of Barabas and Guise. These tremendously popular characters were aspiring minds with a passion and a style seldom seen before, and with new or strangely modified goals for their ambitions. They were towering supermen driven by lust for power and glory, for wealth and for knowledge infinite. The novel connotations of the term "aspiring mind" as epitomized in Marlowe's heroes reveal a new attitude

toward ambition, and a broader, more positive, and even idealistic concept of the content of ambition itself.

The passage in *Tamburlaine* that Esler found so revealing of the Elizabethan mind is in Act 2, Scene 5 (Meridian Edition, edited by Leo Kirschbaum). Tamburlaine speaks to Cosroe after crowning him king of Persia and then, later, deciding to take the crown for himself:

> The thirst of reign and sweetness of a crown
> That caus'd the eldest son of heavenly Ops
> To thrust his doting father from his chair
> And place himself in empyreal heaven,
> Mov'd me to manage arms against thy state.
> What better precedent than mighty Jove?
> Nature that fram'd us of four elements,
> Warring within our breasts for regiment,
> Doth teach us all to have aspiring minds:
> Our souls, whose faculties can comprehend
> The wondrous architecture of the world,
> And measure every wandering planet's course,
> Still climbing after knowledge infinite,
> And always moving as the restless spheres,
> Wills us to wear ourselves, and never rest,
> Until we reach the ripest fruit of all,
> That perfect bliss and sole felicity—
> The sweet fruition of an earthly crown.
> [52–69]

Elizabethans remembered such a battle over the kingship when the Duke of Northumberland had tried to prevent Mary Tudor from ascending the throne after the death of her brother Edward in 1553. Northumberland had had the Marlovian "aspiring mind," or unbridled ambition, long before Marlowe was born. His scheme, involving the Lady Jane Grey, who at age 17 reigned as Queen for nine days, failed. Had he succeeded, the Dudleys would have become the royal family of England and Elizabeth would have never become Queen. Northumberland, Lady Jane Grey and her husband, the duke's son, were duly executed.

10

The Power of Tamburlaine

It is part of the human psyche to worship heroes, particularly strong military heroes who win battles and protect a nation from its enemies. And, of course, Elizabethan England had its galaxy of heroes: Sir Francis Drake, Sir Walter Ralegh, the Earl of Essex, and Sir Philip Sidney.

Francis Drake (1543–1596) rose from humble beginnings to become admiral of the Queen's fleet. He was the first Englishman to circumnavigate the globe. He attacked Spanish shipping and brought tons of treasure back to England, which made him a legend during his lifetime. He was admired as a daring corsair, although the Spaniards simply called him a pirate. He stimulated the predatory instincts of the aristocracy and gentry, the financial and commercial ambition of businessmen, and the adventurousness of seamen. He had all the attributes of a hero: strength of character which enabled him to rise from humble origins and achieve fame for extraordinary feats, determination and will power, courage before the enemy in daring and adventurous exploits, patriotism, and strong religious belief. During his last expedition to the Caribbean, he became ill with dysentery, died on shipboard, and was buried at sea. He was a true Elizabethan hero.

Walter Ralegh (1552–1618), a courtier, writer, and Oxford alumnus, achieved hero status as a result of his exploration and settlement of North America. His successes against the Spanish reinforced his image as a military hero. However, after the death of Elizabeth, James, son of Mary Queen of Scots, acceded to the throne. The Virgin Queen had left no heirs, thus ending the reign of the Tudors. James imprisoned Ralegh because of rumors that he had opposed the new king. He was condemned to death. However, the king, fearing negative public reaction, decided against execution and committed Ralegh to the Tower of London for thirteen years. He was finally released in 1616 and embarked on a new expedition, but because he disobeyed the King's order not to attack the Spanish, he was imprisoned on his return to England and beheaded on October 29, 1618, at age 66. One of the witnesses, greatly moved by Ralegh's courage in the face of death, wrote (Irwin, p. 314):

Great Heart! Who taught thee so to die?
Death yielding thee the Victory!
Where took'st thou leave of life? If here
How could'st thou be so far from fear?
But sure thou died'st and quit'd'st the state
Of Flesh and Blood before that Fate.
Else what a Miracle were wrought,
To triumph both in Flesh and Thought!
I saw in every Stander-by
Pale Death; Life only in thine Eye.
Farewell! Truth shall this Story say,
We died; Thou only lived'st that Day.

Margaret Irwin, Ralegh's biographer, wrote (p. 314):

> Ralegh's head was put in a red velvet bag and taken away with his body in a black coach. ... The body was buried in the front of the Communion table at St Margaret's, Westminster; the head was embalmed, and kept by his widow till she died, twenty-nine years later; and then by his son Carew until his death, when it was buried with him.

It is said that James suffered a troubled conscience for having consigned this genuine hero to the executioner's axe. G.M. Trevelyan, the historian, wrote that "the ghost of Ralegh pursued the House of Stuart to the scaffold."

Another ill-fated hero was the dashing, impetuous Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex (1567–1601), who became Elizabeth's favorite courtier at age 20 when she was 54. Brought up as a ward in Lord Burghley's household, he was given a good Cambridge education. He fought bravely against the Spanish in the Netherlands in 1586 at age 19. In 1590 he married the daughter of Sir Francis Walsingham, widow of Sir Philip Sidney. In 1596 he led a successful force against Cadiz, which put him at the height of his fortunes. But then, after a disastrous campaign in Ireland, he suffered an ignominious decline and rebelled against the Queen.

Robert Lacey, the Earl's biographer, writes: "When Francis Bacon compared him to Icarus, his soaring flight destroyed by the sun, he captured not only the spirit of the man but the essence of the historical tragedy in which he was trapped." But he died like a hero. At his execution in the Tower of London, he said, "I confess I have received an honourable trial and am justly condemned. And I desire all the world to forgive me, even as I do freely and from my heart forgive all the world." He and Ralegh had been rivals, and Essex had now wanted a reconciliation before dying. But Ralegh, thinking that Essex did not want to see him, had left the scaffold and gone up into the Armoury in the Tower, where he stood alone at the window.

Lacy writes: "Then [Essex] knelt down on the straw and repeated the Lord's Prayer. Some of the onlookers joined in. Others looked away. He stripped off his black satin doublet to reveal beneath it the scarlet waistcoat with which his life's blood was soon to be stained. [He] fitted his head to the notch in the block.

He refused a blindfold.... The executioner struck. The first blow drove into the condemned man's shoulder. The second also missed the neck. It was not until the third stroke that the Earl of Essex's head lay severed from his body and the executioner could brandish it in the air. 'God save the Queen.'" He was 34, and thus ended a heroic life.

But probably the most popular of Elizabethan heroes was Sir Philip Sidney (1554–1586), poet, statesman and soldier, who died from wounds inflicted on the battlefield. Born in Kent, he was educated at Oxford and Cambridge and became one of Elizabeth's favorites. In 1581, he had a quarrel with the Earl of Oxford, and the Queen interposed to prevent a duel. In 1583 he married Frances Walsingham, daughter of the Queen's secretary. In that same year he was knighted. He wrote poetry, political tracts, translated the Psalms. Although Sidney had wanted to sail with Drake in an expedition against the Spanish in America, Elizabeth had her own plans for him. She appointed him governor of Flushing in the Netherlands, where English troops were helping the Dutch overthrow their Spanish rulers.

In a battle at Zutphen on September 22, 1586, in which Essex, Lord Willoughby, Sir John Norris and many other valiant soldiers took part, Sidney was gravely wounded. He had not worn his thigh armor because his marshal could not wear his over a wound he had suffered. The fatal musket ball hit Sidney in his unprotected thigh, shattering the bone. After weeks of intense suffering, he died on October 17, 1586. Before his death he bequeathed his best sword to the Earl of Essex, who, at the age of 19, had fought his first battle against the Spaniards. Two years later, Essex would marry Sidney's widow, a marriage that would infuriate the Queen.

A great funeral was held for Sidney in which the highest members of the government marched in the procession to St. Paul's Cathedral where he was buried. Many from Cambridge attended the funeral and undoubtedly Marlowe was among them. Sidney's war-horse was led by a black-clothed footman and was ridden by a little page who trailed a broken lance. It was a spectacle that added to Marlowe's understanding of the world he lived in. He was in the process of creating his own superhero in Tamburlaine. The tragic fates of Ralegh and Essex were years away.

But Tamburlaine's fate is not dependent on the favors of a fickle King or Queen. He is a superman who falls in love with his own captive, Princess Zenocrate. The power of love is a theme to be found in all of Marlowe's work. In Dido, love leads to the Queen's suicide. In Tamburlaine it personifies a central source of power and happiness.

Marlowe's skill as a playwright is apparent in the very opening scene where Mycetes, the King of Persia, is consulting with his jealous brother Cosroe over Persia's weakened state. Cosroe attributes this weakness to his brothers "fickle brain." Mycetes replies, "I might command you to be slain for this." But his counselor advises, "Not for so small a fault, my sovereign lord." To which Mycetes replies, "I mean it not, but yet I know I might." The introduction of

intense conflict between brothers in the opening lines of the play proved the keen instinct for drama that Marlowe possessed.

There is then discussion of what to do about Tamburlaine, "that sturdy Scythian thief that robs your merchants of Persepolis." Mycetes then orders his commanding general, Theridamas, to go after Tamburlaine with a thousand horsemen and tells him to come back "loaded with the heads of killed men: ... *that* makes a dainty show!" Meanwhile, a group of soldiers and gentlemen, fed up with Mycetes' weak rule, urge Cosroe to usurp his brother's throne. Cosroe replies:

> Well, since I see the state of Persia droop
> And languish in my brother's government,
> I willingly receive th' imperial crown,
> And vow to wear it for my country's good.
> [1.1. 155–158]

Cosroe then sets out with his own army to catch up to Theridamas in the war against Tamburlaine.

Scene Two takes us to Tamburlaine's camp where he is in the process of wooing Princess Zenocrate, captive daughter of Soldan of Egypt. The fascinating exchange between the two is in Marlowe's exquisite poetry. The mighty warrior has fallen head over heels in love. Meanwhile, news reaches Tamburlaine of the approaching Persian army. A parley is arranged and Theridamas approaches Tamburlaine, who tells the Persian:

> Forsake thy king, and do but join with me,
> And we will triumph over all the world!
> I hold the Fates bound fast in iron chains,
> And with my hand turn Fortune's wheel about.
> [1.2. 172–175]

Theridamas struggles with Tamburlaine's "strong enchantments." "Shall I prove a traitor to my king?" Tamburlaine replies, "No, but the trusty friend of Tamburlaine." Theridamas surrenders. "Won with thy words, and conquered with thy looks. I yield myself, my men, and horse to thee, to be partaken of thy good or ill, as long as life maintains Theridamas."

With the uncanny talent to turn enemy into loyal friend, Tamburlaine is almost godlike. He is indeed master of his fate and can even "turn Fortune's wheel about."

With such remarkable opening scenes, one can see why Tamburlaine became an instant hit. Tamburlaine not only had the extraordinary characteristics of a hero, he even looked like one. In Act 2, Scene 1, Cosroe asks Menaphon what does Tamburlaine look like. Menaphon replies:

> Of stature tall, and straightly fashioned,
> Like his desire, lift upward and divine:
> So large of limbs, his joints so strongly knit,
> Such breadth of shoulders as might mainly bear

Old Atlas' burthen: 'twixt his manly pitch
A pearl more worth than all the world is plac'd,
Wherein by curious sovereignty of art
Are fix'd his piercing instruments of sight,
Whose fiery circles bear encompassed
A heaven of heavenly bodies in their spheres,
That guides his steps and actions to the throne
Where honor sits invested royally: ...
His arms and fingers, long and sinewy,
Beckoning valor and excess of strength—
In every part proportioned like the man
Should make the world subdued to Tamburlaine.
[7–18; 27–30]

And, indeed, by the end of the fifth act, the world is subdued to Tamburlaine, who was played by Edward Alleyn, the leading actor of his day. And to think that Marlowe wrote this remarkable play at the age of 24, and that Alleyn was even younger than he.

11

Tamburlaine II

The extraordinary success of *Tamburlaine the Great* prompted Marlowe to write a sequel, no doubt at the behest of the theatre owners and Edward Alleyne who realized that the public could not get enough of the Sythian warrior. The prologue to the play says as much:

> The general welcomes Tamburlaine receiv'd,
> When he arrived last upon the stage,
> Have made our poet pen his Second Part,
> Where death cuts off the progress of his pomp,
> And murderous Fates throw all his triumphs down.

The first act opens with Orcanes, the Moslem king of Natolia, who had conquered Christian Europe up to the gates of Vienna, making a pact with King Sigismund, Christian king of Hungary, to join forces in combatting Tamburlaine. Both kings take oaths to solemnize their alliance against Tamburlaine. Sigismund states:

> By Him that made the world and sav'd my soul,
> The Son of God and issue of a maid,
> Sweet Jesus Christ, I solemnly protest
> And vow to keep this peace inviolable!

King Orcanes states in turn:

> By sacred Mahomet, the friend of God,
> Whose holy Alcoran remains with us,
> Whose glorious body, when he left the world,
> Clos'd in a coffin mounted up the air,
> And hung on stately Mecca's temple-roof,
> I swear to keep this truce inviolable!
> [I.i. 133–142]

The two kings then celebrate their alliance with a banquet. The next scene takes us to Tamburlaine's prison where Callapine, son of Bajazeth the Turkish king captured by Tamburlaine and kept in a cage, lures his jailor, Almeda, to help him escape by promising to make him a king. Callapine tells the naïve keeper:

Amongst so many crowns of bunish'd gold,
Choose which thou wilt, all are at thy command:
A thousand galleys, mann'd with Christian slaves,
I freely give thee, which shall cut the Straits,
And bring armadoes, from the coasts of Spain,
Fraughted with gold of rich America:
The Grecian virgins shall attend thee,
Skilful in music and in amorous lays ...
With naked negroes shall thy coach be drawn,
And, as thou rid'st in triumph through the streets,
The pavement underneath thy chariot wheels
With Turkey-carpets will be covered ...
[1.2. 30–43]

Obviously, an offer Almeda could not resist, and so he deserts Tamburlaine and helps Callapine escape. All of this prepares the audience for the battle scene to come. Meanwhile, in a fascinating domestic scene, Zenocrate, Tamburlaine's wife, asks her husband, "when wilt thou leave these arms, and save thy sacred person free from scathe, and dangerous changes of the wrathful war?" Tamburlaine's answer: "When heaven shall cease to move on both the poles ..." Tamburlaine then complains to Zenocrate about their three sons: "methinks their looks are amorous, not martial as the sons of Tamburlaine." Two of the sons convince their father of their martial valor. However, the third son, Calyphas, tells his father:

But, while my brothers follow arms, my lord,
Let me accompany my gracious mother:
They are enough to conquer the world,
And you have won enough for me to keep.

To which Tamburlaine responds angrily:

Bastardly boy, sprung from some coward's loins,
And not the issue of great Tamburlaine!
[1.3. 65–70]

The other two sons affirm their willingness to follow in their father's footsteps. The scene then shifts to Tamburlaine and his African commanders who relate to their chief what they have accomplished in creating armies to help Tamburlaine.

In Act 2, King Sigismund is urged by his two Christian allies, Frederick and Baldwin, to use this temporary truce with Orcanes as an opportunity to take revenge on the Moslems for their killing of Christians. But Sigismund replies: "This should be treachery and violence against the grace of our profession." To which Frederick replies with passion:

Assure your grace, 'tis superstition
To stand so strictly on dispensive faith,
And, should we lose the opportunity
That God hath given to venge our Christians' death,

And scourge their foul blasphemous paganism,
As fell to Saul, to Balaam, and the rest,
That would not kill and curse at God's command,
So surely will the vengeance of the Highest,
And jealous anger of his fearful arm,
Be pour'd with rigour on our sinful heads,
If we neglect this offer'd victory.
[2.1. 49–59]

Sigismund agrees to attack Orcanes, which leads to the defeat of the Christians and Sigismund's own death. Obviously, Marlowe's knowledge of the Bible and Christian history, which he studied and pondered over at Cambridge, gave him a perspective that enhanced his dramatic affect. Ironically, Orcanes the Moslem, calls on Christ to give him victory over Sigismund. He states:

Thou, Christ, that art esteem'd omnipotent,
If thou wilt prove thyself a perfect God,
Worthy the worship of all faithful hearts,
Be now reveng'd upon this traitor's soul,
And make the power I have left behind
(Too little to defend our guiltless lives)
Sufficient to discomfit and confound
The trustless force of those false Christians!—
To arms, my lords! On Christ still let us cry:
If there be Christ, we shall have victory.
[55–64]

And victory they achieve, with Sigismund admitting that "God hath thunder'd vengeance from on high, for my accurs'd and hateful perjury."

In Scene 4, Zenocrate dies, with Tamburlaine experiencing a terrifying grief at the loss of his loving wife.

In the first scene of Act 3, Tamburlaine's foes, Orcanes, Callapine and confederates, prepare to do battle with the Sythian. Zenocrate's funeral takes place in Scene 2, in which Tamburlaine orders the burning of the town in which his wife died. Tamburlaine then instructs his sons in the rudiments of war to make sure that they know of the hardships expected of them:

I'll have you learn to sleep upon the ground,
March in your armour thorough watery fens,
Sustain the scorching heat and freezing cold,
Hunger and thirst, right adjuncts of the war;
And, after this, to scale a castle-wall,
Besiege a fort, to undermine a town,
And make whole cities caper in the air;
Then next, the way to fortify your men; ...
The ditches must be deep; the counterscarps
Narrow and steep; the walls made high and broad;
The bulwarks and the rampires large and strong,
With cavalieros and thick counterforts,
And room within to lodge six thousand men,

It must have privy ditches, countermines,
And secret issuings to defend the ditch;
It must have high argins and cover'd ways
To keep the bulwark-fronts from battery,
And parapets to hide the musketeers,
Casements to place the great artillery,
And store of ordnance, that from every flank
May scour the outward curtains of the fort,
Dismount the cannon of the adverse part,
Murder the foe, and save the walls from breach.
[3.2. 55–82]

Where did young Marlowe learn all of this? No doubt, he had studied the ancient walls of the city of Canterbury, its defenses, along with methods of soldiery and warfare. He also read a lot at Cambridge. All of this he poured into his drama to give it the sense of total reality.

Tamburlaine's effeminate son remarks:

My lord, but this is dangerous to be done;
We may be slain or wounded ere we learn.
[93–94]

To which Tamburlaine angrily replies:

Villain, art thou the son of Tamburlaine,
And fear'st to die, or with a curtle-axe
To hew thy flesh, and make a gaping wound?
[95–97]

Tamburlaine cuts his arm to prove his total disdain for pain.

A wound is nothing, be it ne'er so deep;
Blood is the god of war's rich livery.
[115–116]

This is the kind of language the audience must have relished.

In Scene 3, Tamburlaine's forces reach the town of Balsera in Soria, today's Syria, "wherein is all the treasure in the land." Theridamas tries to persuade Captain, the town's governor, that it would be futile to resist and that he ought to surrender the town peacefully in order to avoid bloodshed and destruction. But Captain is resolute, he will fight rather than surrender. However, he is fatally wounded in the ensuing battle, and his wife Olympia is captured by Theridamas as she is about to kill herself. Theridamas successfully dissuades the woman from suicide, telling her: "Madam, I am so far in love with you, that you must go with us." He carries her off.

In Scene 5, Tamburlaine's enemies, Orcanes, Callapine, Almeda, and others, confer before setting off into battle. Tamburlaine and sons enter the scene and exchange threats, insults and grisly images of what is to come.

Act 4 begins with a fascinating scene involving Tamburlaine's sons. The alarm has sounded for battle, and the two brave ones confront Calyphas, their

pacifist, effeminate brother. "Away, ye fools! My father needs not me," he cries. They accuse him of cowardice in the face of attack. Calyphas replies:

> I know, sir, what it is to kill a man;
> It works remorse of conscience in me.
> I take no pleasure to be murderous,
> Nor care for blood when wine will quench my thirst.
> [4.1.27–30]

They leave in disgust, while their brother sits out the battle playing cards. The battle ends with another great Tamburlaine triumph, and the captive Moslem kings are put in chains. It is in this highly charged scene that Tamburlaine stabs his coward son to death. He then says:

> Theridamas, Techelles, and Casane,
> Ransack the tents and the pavilions
> Of these proud Turks, and take their concubines,
> Making them bury this effeminate brat;
> For not a common soldier shall defile
> His manly fingers with so faint a boy:
> Then bring those Turkish harlots to my tent,
> And I'll dispose them as it likes me best.—
> [159–166]

Then turning to his captives, Tamburlaine says:

> Well, bark, ye dogs: I'll bridle all your tongues,
> And bind them close with bits of burnish'd steel,
> Down to the channels of your hateful throats.
> [182–184]

In Scene 2, Theridamas tries to persuade Olympia to marry him. But she remains loyal to her dead husband and son. In an ingenious ruse, she manages to have Theridamas inadvertently kill her.

Scene 3 is undoubtedly the most popular and best known scene in the play. According to the directions, "Tamburlaine, drawn in his chariot by the Kings of Trebizon and Soria, with bits in their mouths, reins in his left hand, and in his right hand a whip with which he scourgeth them," shouts:

> Holla, ye pamper'd jades of Asia!
> What, can ye draw but twenty miles a-day,
> And have so proud a chariot at your heels,
> And such a coachman as great Tamburlaine,
> But from Asphaltis, where I conquer'd you,
> To Byron here, where thus I honour you?
> [4.3.1–6]

The intensity of the drama along with its ironic humor must have had the audiences reeling with laughter and awe. If nothing else, Marlowe knew how to entertain the playgoers. His knowledge was instinctive because his experience as a playwright was almost non-existent. It was with *Tamburlaine the Great* that

he was able to test his talent with a real live audience. And it was not only the complex plot, suspenseful action, and panorama of colorful characters that thrilled the audiences, but the poetry, rich in color, sublime in philosophy. The two plays were masterpieces, sheer works of genius.

In Act 5, Tamburlaine's forces are about to assault Babylon. The Governor is urged by his chief advisor and citizens to surrender the city to Tamburlaine. But the Governor will not yield. He is determined to fight to the death. However, when he is captured, he pleads for his life. Tamburlaine has him killed and orders all the inhabitants to be slain.

Tamburlaine then turns to one of his aides:

> Now, Casane, where's the Turkish Alcoran,
> And all the heaps of superstitious books
> Found in the temples of that Mahomet
> Whom I have thought a god? They shall be burnt....
> In vain, I see, men worship Mahomet:
> My sword hath sent millions of Turks to hell,
> Slew all his priests, his kinsmen, and his friends,
> And yet I live untouch'd by Mahomet.
> There is a God, full of revenging wrath,
> From whom the thunder and the lightning breaks,
> Whose scourge I am, and him will I obey,
> So, Casane; fling them in the fire,—
> Now, Mahomet, if thou have any power,
> Come down thyself and work a miracle:
> Thou are not worthy to be worshipped
> That suffer'st flames of fire to burn the writ
> Wherein the sum of thy religion rests....
> Well, soldiers, Mahomet remains in hell;
> He cannot hear the voice of Tamburlaine:
> Seek out another godhead to adore;
> The God that sits in heaven, if any god,
> For he is God alone, and none but he.
> [5.1. 171–174; 177–189; 196–200]

It is shortly after that speech, that Tamburlaine feels "distemper'd suddenly."

> Whatsoe'er it be,
> Sickness or death can never conquer me.
> [219–220]

Meanwhile, Callapine has assembled a new army to conquer Tamburlaine. He states:

> All Turkey is in arms with Callapine;
> And never will we sunder camps and arms
> Before himself or his be conquered:
> This is the time that must eternise me
> For conquering the tyrant of the world.
> [5.2. 51–55]

Meanwhile, Tamburlaine's loyal men are beside themselves at the thought of their leader dying. The physician gives his pessimistic diagnosis:

> I view'd your urine, and the hypostasis,
> Thick and obscure, doth make your danger great:
> Your veins are full of accidental heat ...
> Your artiers which alongst the veins convey
> The lively spirits which the heart engenders,
> Are parch'd and void of spirits, that the soul
> Wanting those orgonons by which it moves,
> Cannot endure by argument of art.
> Yet, if your majesty may escape this day,
> No doubt but you shall soon recover all.
> [5.3. 82–99]

From where did Marlowe learn so much about the medical practices of his time? Probably from the books at Cambridge.

Despite his illness, Tamburlaine joins his troops in going after Callapine, whose army flees from battle, thus escaping defeat and capture by Tamburlaine. Knowing that death is near, Tamburlaine asks his sons to bring him a map so that he can relate to them all of his conquests and what is still left to conquer. After seeing his eldest son crowned in his place, his last words are:

> Farewell, my boys! My dearest friends, farewell!
> My body feels, my soul doth weep to see
> Your sweet desires depriv'd my company,
> For Tamburlaine, the scourge of God, must die!
> [245–248]

Thus ends this extraordinary epic, the first poem ever written in English blank verse. As Swinburne put it, "Marlowe is the greatest discoverer, the most daring and inspired pioneer, in all our poetic literature." Yet his works are hardly staged today, ironically eclipsed by the works attributed to Shakespeare.

12

The Spanish Armada

The year 1588 was a very good one for Marlowe. He had achieved instant success as a playwright with the productions of Tamburlaine I and II. But his literary fame was temporarily eclipsed by a much greater event that loomed over the horizon: the impending invasion of England by a Spanish Armada.

Both the Pope and King Philip II of Spain had been shocked and outraged by the execution of Mary Queen of Scots, whom they considered to be the legitimate Catholic Sovereign of England. In fact, from 1568 onwards, when Mary had been made prisoner by Elizabeth, the Pope had urged the assassination of Elizabeth and an invasion of England whereby Mary would be placed on the throne. That plot was called the Ridolfi conspiracy. Colin Martin and Geoffrey Parker write in *The Spanish Armada:*

> It originated with the Spanish ambassador in England, and involved a group of Catholic peers led by the duke of Norfolk. Their plan was to instigate a Catholic rebellion, assassinate Elizabeth, and proclaim Mary. The coup was to be supported by a simultaneous invasion by Philip II's forces under Martin de Bertendona, who would lead a small fleet of warships from Spain into the North Sea and gain control of the seaway between England and the Netherlands. Across these safe waters the duke of Alba would then send a strike-force of 10,000 picked men from the Army of Flanders to land in England and secure Mary's throne.

But the plot was found out when a courier for the main conspirator, the Florentine banker, Roberto Ridolfi, was captured by the English. Under torture he revealed all. And thus the conspiracy came to naught. The Duke of Norfolk was executed. But Philip II never lost his burning desire to remove Elizabeth from the throne and restore England to the Catholic fold. He was convinced that this was God's will. And so, plans for a new invasion began to take shape in 1585 while Mary was still alive.

But the execution of the Babington plotters had thrown a monkey wrench into their plans. Nevertheless, in July of 1587, six months after Mary's execution, the Pope and Philip II agreed on a new invasion plan, which required the removal of Elizabeth and the restoration of Catholic rule. The Pope paid the king one million ducats to carry out the plan.

Both the Pope and Philip II saw the invasion as a sacred Catholic crusade to liberate the English from the tyranny of the Protestant heretics. Philip II had been married to Mary Tudor, Elizabeth's Catholic sister, who had launched a reign of terror against the Protestants, and therefore Philip II, as former brother-in-law to Elizabeth, maintained a sort of God-inspired mission to liberate England from the Reformation. Since Mary Queen of Scots was no longer alive to take possession of the throne, the Pope and Philip II designated Cardinal William Allen, a Lancashire-born Oxford academic who had gone into exile at the start of Elizabeth's reign, to take charge of the new Catholic government.

An invasion of England would also put an end to the depredations visited on Spanish shipping by such adventurous privateers as Sir Francis Drake. As late as December 1586, Drake had received orders to "impeach the provisions of Spain," raid her supply lines and capture her shipping at sea. But Drake went further than his instructions allowed. Having learned that there was a great gathering of Spanish shipping in Cadiz, Drake headed in that direction and steered straight into Cadiz harbor. He attacked the surprised Spanish warships, incapacitating them. All the defenseless merchant ships in the harbor now lay in Drake's hands. The ships were looted, burned, and sunk, and by nightfall Philip II's ships had all been destroyed or disabled.

It was also in 1587 that Drake managed to capture, near the Azores, the *San Felipe*, the largest merchant vessel in the world, the private property of Philip II. She had come all the way from the Far East laden with spices, silks, Chinese porcelain, pearls, velvets, furniture. The capture of this great ship with its incredibly valuable cargo was the crown jewel in Drake's campaign that year. These feats were a devastating blow to Spain's prestige, and Philip II was determined to avenge them with the great Armada.

In December 1587, Elizabeth gave Drake command of an independent fleet of thirty ships, seven of which were to be Royal Navy vessels. Lord Howard of Effingham was appointed Lord Admiral of England, or Commander-in-Chief of all naval forces. The pattern of command for the crisis year of 1588 had taken shape.

Despite these preparations, Queen Elizabeth was anxious to avoid war and she sent a peace party to the Netherlands to negotiate a settlement with the Duke of Parma. In January 1588, a commission to treat with Parma crossed to Ostend. Its members were Lord Derby, Lord Cobham, Dr. Dale and Sir James Croft. After offering some very generous concessions to Philip II, the commission returned to London only to learn that the Queen was furious over the concessions offered. Besides, as it turned out, the King of Spain was in no mood for peace. He wanted his crusade to go forward. Neither were Walsingham, Burghley, Drake and Howard in a mood for peace. The Catholic war against Protestant England had to be engaged once and for all and defeated.

By May of 1588, the Armada of 125 ships and 30,000 men, the largest fleet the world had ever seen, was ready to set sail on its mission. According to King Philip II's plan, the Armada was to sail up the English Channel and rendezvous

in the straits of Dover with the Spanish invasion forces stationed in the Netherlands, known as the Army of Flanders. It would then escort a substantial part of that army, aboard specially prepared landing craft, to a beach-head in Kent. From this point the whole operation would come under the supreme command of the Duke of Parma, Philip II's nephew.

Parma's 18,000 men would land in the vicinity of Sandwich, upon which the Armada would off-load supplies, munitions, reserve troops and a heavy artillery train. This hard-hitting mobile army would then launch a fast-moving assault on London. The plan was, in essence, a reconstitution of the plan hatched in 1568.

The king's Captain-General in command of the Armada was 38-year-old Duke of Medina Sidonia, a landsman without previous experience of war afloat. The Duke had replaced the former admiral of the Spanish fleet, Alvaro de Bazan, 1st Marquis of Santa Cruz, who died in February of 1588. The Duke of Medina Sidonia was, in Garret Mattingley's words, "a grandee of such dazzling eminence that no officer in the fleet could feel insulted by his promotion, or find it beneath his dignity to obey him." He was a devout Catholic and fully understood the religious nature of the mission. Ernle Bradford, in his biography of Drake, writes (p. 193):

> It was on the 25th April that the Duke of Medina Sidonia had gone to the Cathedral of Lisbon, and had taken from its altar the sanctified standard which he was to bear aboard his flagship in the crusade against the heretics. The Archbishop of Lisbon had pronounced a benediction on the Enterprise of England. Every man who took part in it was given Papal absolution and indulgence, since he was going as a soldier of Christ against the legions of the Devil.

In other words, even the crews were imbued with the holiness of the Armada's mission, and they were warned against swearing and other sins that would defame the enterprise. Of course, with the failure of the peace mission, Walsingham, Burghley, and the Queen were aware that Philip II was intent on carrying out his plan. Walsingham had gotten many details of the plan from the Babington plotters and his spies on the continent. But in any event, an enterprise this gigantic could hardly be kept secret. However, they still did not know the specifics, how many ships would be involved and exactly where along the coast the invasion would take place.

Although the Armada had already set sail in May, bad weather and some mishaps forced it back to Lisbon. As Elizabeth Jenkins writes in *Elizabeth and Leicester* (p. 347):

> Meanwhile, in England the shires were directed to muster men at arms, and the landowners provided and equipped contingents of their own servants and tenants. Preparations were made for barricading roads and destroying bridges, and a great chain of beacons was established on headlands and on hills to carry the alarm when it should be received, from Land's End up to Cumberland with the speed of light.

Since Canterbury was close to the Channel coast where the invasion was most likely to take place, Marlowe's father was involved in its defense. Philip Henderson writes in *Marlowe* (p. 6):

> In the year of the Armada, when his son's Tamburlaine was scourging kingdoms with his conquering swords and harnessing kings to his coach on the London stage, John Marlowe appears in city records as a member of the second platoon of Canterbury archers who left to join the trained bands to fight the Spaniards.

And what was Christopher Marlowe doing? Apparently Walsingham decided to send him on a simple but important mission to the Netherlands. One of Walsingham's cleverest spies in the Netherlands was a merchant by the name of Jan Wychgerde who supplied the Spanish army with butter and cheese, salt fish, and wheat for biscuits. He knew the Duke of Parma personally and could converse with him. Hugh Ross Williamson writes (p. 126):

> The question which Walsingham wanted [Wychgerde] to answer was whether Parma's present siege of Ostend, which was defended by an English garrison, was intentionally languid and undertaken mainly as a cover for the secret peace negotiations or whether it was merely a feint to cover a projected attack elsewhere which would lead to an intensification of the war in the Low Countries.

It was Marlowe's mission to get the appropriate answer from the Dutch merchant. Williamson speculates that the mission took place in 1587, while Marlowe was still a student at Cambridge. However, we can speculate that as the Armada reached the Channel in 1588, Marlowe may have gone down to the coast to observe the scene as so many other Englishmen did. His mother's family lived in Dover, not far from where the invasion was to take place.

On May 28, 1588, the duke of Medina Sidonia led his great Armada out of Lisbon harbor to the ocean. But its progress northward was slow and difficult. On June 19, the fleet put into the harbor at Corunna for replenishment. Twenty-four ships had been left outside the harbor. During the night a fierce storm battered the 24 ships and scattered them far and wide. Alarmed by this turn of events, Medina Sidonia called for a council of war among the fleet commanders who decided to attempt to persuade the king to call off the enterprise. Medina Sidonia argued that perhaps the storm had been a sign warning them that God did not favor the enterprise. But Philip II was not deterred and commanded them to proceed as planned.

On July 21, with almost all of the scattered ships reunited with the Armada, Medina Sidonia set sail again. On July 25 he sent a pinnace to Parma, informing him of his approach.

On the next day an English force of 64 ships, of which only 24 were fighting vessels, were at sea. By that afternoon, Drake and Howard had the Armada in sight off Dodman Point. The wind at this point was favorable to the Armada, the largest fleet the world had ever seen. It took the Armada 17 days to reach the Channel where its rendezvous with Parma was to take place.

During those 17 days the English could do little more than harass the fleet with minor skirmishes and some cannon fire, inflicting minor damage. One of the Spanish ships accidentally exploded, and Drake saw the opportunity to gain a prize. He captured it and towed the ship into Plymouth harbor where it was

stripped of anything of value. Another Spanish ship was involved in a collision, disabling it. Howard managed to capture it and tow it into port.

It was during that slow procession toward the Channel that Medina Sidonia began to have serious concerns about Parma. His message had not reached Parma, and he had heard nothing from Parma. He wanted Parma to be waiting for the Armada when he got there, with barges fully loaded with men ready to cross the Channel and land on English soil.

Finally, on Saturday, August 6, the Armada reached the Channel and dropped anchor in Calais Roads, beyond which point Medina Sidonia dared not proceed. Parma and his invasion force were nowhere to be seen. And if Parma did not come soon, and with plenty of fresh supplies of ammunition, food and water, there was no way the Armada could achieve the invasion Philip II had so passionately dreamed of for so many years.

At Calais, the Armada and its commander were greeted by the Catholic governor, who offered Medina Sidonia a large present of fresh fruit. The Spaniards were permitted to go ashore and purchase water, fresh vegetables, and other foods. But Medina Sidonia worried that if they were anchored too long at that place, they'd be sitting ducks for the English.

Meanwhile, on Sunday, August 7, a council of war met aboard Howard's *Ark Royal* attended by Howard, Drake, Hawkins, Seymour and Frobisher. Howard knew instinctively what Medina Sidonia was thinking. His objective was not so much to destroy ships as to create confusion, chaos, and panic throughout the Armada. Thus, the decision was made to use the deadliest weapon one fleet could use against another, the fireship. Howard designated eight suitable ships for the job. The ships were emptied of gear and stores and filled with anything combustible.

But Medina Sidonia was prepared for such an attack. He set a screen of small craft to grapple and tow any fireships that approached. When the attack took place at midnight, two of the fireships were indeed intercepted and dragged into the shallows. But the other six got through. As the fireships drew nearer, the Duke ordered all ships to cut or slip their cables and move away from the path of the fireships. He ordered that as soon as the danger was over, the fleet should re-anchor as close to the original position as possible. But that was more easily said than done. Most captains simply cut their cables and fled.

The Royal Navy took advantage of the confusion and began pummeling the remaining ships with close range cannon fire, inflicting heavy damage. The Armada had lost its tight defensive formation and its battle discipline. Nor could it wait much longer for Parma to show up with his invasion force, which was being prevented from doing so by the Dutch who believed that the Armada was aimed at an invasion of the Netherlands. Colin Martin and Geoffrey write in *The Spanish Armada:*

> The battle which followed lasted nine hours, and was fought along the fringes of the shoal waters between Gravelines and Ostend. It was fierce and very confused, but it may be summarised as a running fight in which the Spaniards strove to

maintain their defence in a unified and compact formation, and to keep as close as possible to Parma's ports of embarkation, while the English endeavoured to cut out the weathermost ships and force the rest leewards into the shallows. A vital factor was the wind, which veered steadily throughout the day from south-south-west to north-west, setting the Spanish fleet at an increasingly greater disadvantage as it did so. The weather too had deteriorated; the sea was now rough and visibility poor.

Despite heavy damage and casualties and the fact that the Armada was no longer together, Medina Sidonia was determined to wait for Parma as long as he could. On the evening of August 9, the Armada was helped by favorable winds to clear the Flemish shoals and into the North Sea. Medina Sidonia held a council of war to determine what strategy the fleet should now adopt. The council was unanimous: if at all possible the Armada, or what was left of it, would turn about and go back to the Channel for a second attempt to pick up Parma's forces and invade England. But the winds had now pushed the Spaniards too far, and they did not turn back.

On August 19, Queen Elizabeth addressed her army at Tilbury, where Leicester had set up camp. There was still fear that Parma might launch his invasion. Wearing a dress of virginal white velvet and her most fiery red wig, she sat regally on horseback, and said:

> My loving people! My loving people! We have been persuaded by some that are careful of our safety, to take heed how we commit ourselves to armed multitudes for fear of treachery. But I do assure you, I do not desire to live to distrust my faithful and loving people.... I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a King, and of a King of England too, and think foul scorn that Parma or Spain, or any Prince of Europe should dare to invade the borders of my realm, to which, rather than any dishonour should grow by me, I myself will take up arms.

That evening, as the Queen dined with Leicester in his tent, news of the great victory over the Armada was received, and throughout the camp, bonfires burned far into the night as the troops rejoiced.

The failure of the Armada was colossal. Many of its ships foundered off Norway, Scotland and Ireland with an enormous loss of life. Those who did not drown were slaughtered when they waded ashore. Only about sixty ships ultimately returned to Spain, and more than 10,000 men had perished. For Philip II it meant that his faith in God's favor was certainly deeply shaken as it was in the Vatican. The Catholic crusade had suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of the Protestant heretics. Elizabeth had defeated her enemies, and celebrations took place all across the realm. England, in triumph, could at last enjoy a period of peace and prosperity.

13

Marlowe's Friends

Back in London, the victory over the Armada was celebrated with tournaments and reviews. The theatre was bursting with activity, and Marlowe was already at work on a new play, *The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus.* It's about a university intellectual's rebellion against God and the pact he makes with the devil in order to achieve power, riches, and the love of beautiful women. Dr. Leo Kirschbaum writes (p. 102–103):

> Let us see the play in the terms of the basic Christian values it preaches, for it is, we must recognize, a morality play.... We must accept, for the occasion, that man's most precious possession is his immortal soul and that what he does on earth will determine whether he goes to Heaven or Hell, whether after his worldly life he will enjoy perpetual bliss with God or perpetual pain with the Devil....
>
> In the play the Devil and Hell are omnipresent, potent, dangerous, and terrifying realities. But the protagonist makes a bargain with Evil, and for the sake of earthly learning, earthly power, earthly satisfaction goes down to horrible and everlasting perdition.... Marlowe protrays his "hero" as a wretched creature who for lower values gives up higher ones. Thus, the drama is a morality play in which Heaven combats with Hell for the soul of a Renaissance Everyman and, due to the latter's psychological and moral weaknesses, loses.

That Marlowe should write a play based on orthodox Christian doctrine should surprise no one. Six years of intensive study of religion at Cambridge provided him with a foundation of Christian doctrine that would be with him for the rest of his life. Indeed, Marlowe had written a play that would have pleased both Sir Francis Walsingham and Lord Burghley, his governmental benefactors. Both men were devout Protestants who had spent their lives defending the faith against England's Catholic enemies. It is inconceivable that Marlowe secretly sympathized with Faustus, as some modern critics have suggested.

It is true that Marlowe began to acquire a reputation for spewing antibiblical and atheistic doctrine. But there is nothing in his writings to substantiate these rumors and allegations. Rumors had circulated at Cambridge that he had become a Catholic because of his visit to the Catholic Seminary at Rheims. It is doubtful that he revealed to anyone the real nature of his mission.

He had left Cambridge in 1587 at age 24 to make his literary fortune in London. There, Marlowe shared rooms with Thomas Watson, fellow member of the secret service who had known the Walsinghams since 1581. Watson, ten years older than Marlowe, was probably given the task by Walsingham of watching over the young spy in hectic London. He had no doubt given Marlowe a rundown of what to expect at the Catholic seminary at Rheims and how to behave when he got there. Watson, a graduate of Oxford, was highly gifted in his knowledge of Latin and became England's best Latin poet. Above all, from Marlowe's point of view, Watson had all the right connections. He was the perfect friend intellectually and professionally for a novice of low birth embarking on a tumultuous literary career while still working for Walsingham.

Being in London, Marlowe soon became known as one of a group of ambitious authors, educated at Oxford and Cambridge, who were writing plays for the thriving theatre business. They included Thomas Kyd, Robert Greene, George Peele, Thomas Lodge, and Thomas Nashe. Kyd wrote for the Theatre where Edward Alleyn was the leading actor. Son of a highly respected scrivener, Kyd, six years older than Marlowe, was the only writer who was not a university graduate. He had attended the Merchant Taylor's School whose headmaster was Richard Mulcaster, a brilliant Latinist and Greek scholar, a pupil of Sir John Cheke at King's College, Cambridge. The school was the largest in England and was distinguished by its alumni, which included Edmund Spencer who had spent eight years there. Other alumni included Lancelot Andrewes and Thomas Lodge.

Kyd's play, *The Spanish Tragedy*, his best-known work, was enormously popular and frequently performed. Marlowe was closely acquainted with Kyd, whose rooms he shared in 1592. In fact, Kyd's fate was very much intertwined with Marlowe's.

Thomas Nashe (1567–1601), three years younger than Marlowe, had spent nearly seven years at St. John's College, Cambridge. His stay at Cambridge overlapped with Marlowe's. That they were good friends is indicated by the fact that Nashe collaborated with Marlowe in writing *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, and his name appears on the title page of the first edition.

Edward Alleyn, who achieved great success in the roles of Tamburlaine, Doctor Faustus, and Barabas, the Jew of Malta, was the most popular actor of his time, rivaled only by Richard Burbage. In 1592, he married the stepdaughter of Philip Henslowe, the great theater builder of the Elizabethan era. Henslowe had built the Rose theatre on the south bank of the Thames in 1577. In 1600, with Alleyn as partner, he built the Fortune, one of the most popular playhouses of the time. His account books or "diary" exist for the years 1592–1603 and include theater receipts and expenditures as well as the names of plays and dates of their performances.

During these years the income that Marlowe received as a secret agent for Walsingham supplemented whatever he could earn as a playwright. The death of Walsingham in 1590 did not end Marlowe's connection with the secret service. Lord Burghley took charge of the network. He considered the gifted poet-

playwright to be a valuable asset to the crucial business of gathering intelligence. For Marlowe, being an agent enabled him to travel widely in Europe. In 1592 he acted as courier and messenger between Burghley and the British ambassador in Paris.

In September of 1589, Marlowe, living with Watson in London for only a year or so, was arrested for taking part in a fight that resulted in the death of one William Bradley. William Urry gives an account of what happened (p. 62). Here is a slightly shortened version:

> In the early afternoon of Thursday 18 September [Marlowe] was set upon by William Bradley in Hog Lane on the way up from Moorgate to the theatre district. Bradley, the son of William Bradley, landlord of the Bishop Inn, had been involved earlier in a quarrel with Marlowe's friend Thomas Watson over a debt owed by Bradley to John Allen, innkeeper, and possibly brother of actor Edward Alleyn. Bradley may have recognized Marlowe as Watson's friend and attacked him for that reason. Shouts were raised by onlookers and Thomas Watson appeared on the scene, appeals being made to him to separate the combatants. Bradley turned on Watson, wounding him slightly with his sword and his dagger, forcing him back to the edge of one of the ditches bordering the lane. Watson lunged at Bradley to defend himself and ran his blade into the right side of Bradley's chest. The wound was fatal.

Marlowe and Watson were jailed in Newgate prison, but Marlowe was soon released on sureties arranged by his friend and patron, Thomas Walsingham. Park Honan writes in *Christopher Marlowe: Poet and Spy* (p. 227): "It is reasonably clear for the first time that the Privy Council appointed sureties for both Marlowe and Watson, and lessened their miseries at Newgate."

Marlowe appeared in court on December 3, 1589. Among the justices was Sir Roger Manwood, Chief Baron of the Exchequer, well known to Marlowe as a fellow Canterburian. Marlowe was set at liberty, but his friend Watson did not emerge from Newgate until the following February.

There is no doubt that Watson played an important part in Marlowe's life as a spy. Charles Nicholl's research into the Walsingham network has provided much interesting biographical detail about Watson than was previously known.

It appears that Watson was born in London in 1556 of a Catholic family. In 1567, at age 11, he was sent to school at Winchester, which had a strong Catholic presence among its staff. He then studied briefly at Oxford. In 1570 he embarked for Europe. His travels on the continent lasted over seven years. He learned the "language and manners" of Italy and France and studied canon and civil law. In 1576 Watson entered the English College at Douai, in Flanders, the same Catholic seminary which later removed to Rheims, to which Marlowe was sent as a spy while still at Cambridge. No doubt Watson provided Marlowe with intimate details about the seminary and what he should expect to find there.

In 1577 Watson returned to England. In 1579 he shared rooms with an Oxford acquaintance, Mr. Beale, a preacher. Watson also became friends with historian William Camden, deputy headmaster at Winchester, who contributed verses to Watson's *Antigone*. At this time, a small group of poets lived in West-

minster and became known as the University wits. Among them were Spencer, Sir Philip Sidney, Edward Dyer, Gabriel Harvey, John Lyly, author of *Euphues*, George Peale and Matthew Roydon.

Watson's first book, a Latin version of *Antigone*, was published in 1581. It was dedicated to Philip Howard, Earl of Arundel. The Howards were the premier Catholic family in England. The earl's father was Thomas Howard, 3rd Duke of Norfolk, executed in 1572 for treasonable dealings with Mary Queen of Scots.

In 1581 we find Watson in Paris. His recruitment into Walsingham's network seems to have taken place at that time. It was there that he became acquainted with Thomas Walsingham who was then, at age 18, working for his cousin as a courier. Nicholl writes (p. 182):

> Evidence of Watson's involvement with the Walsinghams is found in his poem *Melibocus*, published in 1590. This is an elegy for Sir Francis Walsingham, who died that April, and it is addressed and dedicated to Thomas Walsingham.... In the course of the poem Watson recalls the time of his first friendship with Thomas Walsingham, when they were both living 'by the banks of the Seine' in Paris. This takes us back to the early 1580s when, as we have seen, Thomas Walsingham was working in France as a confidential government messenger, being groomed for Sir Francis's service.

Another individual who was to play an important role in Marlowe's fate was Robert Poley. He was one of Walsingham's key agents in the Babington affair in which he arranged the entrapment of the plotters. In August 1586, Poley was arrested and imprisoned in the Tower of London so that the government could deny the accusation of having concocted the plot itself in order to get rid of Mary Queen of Scots. Poley remained in the Tower until the autumn of 1588. From his release until 1601, he travelled on at least thirty missions for the secret service.

Getting back to the duel with William Bradley, we can imagine the traumatic effect this deadly fight, and Marlowe's stay at the rat-infested Newgate prison, had on the poet. Life could indeed be harsh in those days, but he was willing to give up the security of a career in Holy Orders for the insecurity of a poet's life. If he had any economic security at all, it was through his work as an agent for the government. But it was his genius alone that permitted him to transcend his low economic status. Marlowe knew the life of the common man as well as that of the aristocracy through his service as a page to Philip Sidney, rubbing shoulders with the sons of noblemen at Cambridge, and his friendship with Thomas Walsingham.

Genius opened the doors to the rather small coterie of free-thinking intellectuals in Elizabethan society. Thus, Marlowe became a participant in Sir Walter Ralegh's intimate circle of intellects, which become known as a hotbed of atheism. Margaret Irwin, in *The Great Lucifer* writes (pp. 87–88):

> The circle that [Ralegh] gathered round him at his home, or close by it at Cerne Abbas in Dorset, soon won for itself the ominous name of "The School of Night."

> Cerne Abbas has borne a reputation for witchcraft down to our own day, and had long before Ralegh's.... They were certainly a group to astonish any countryside. One was Thomas Hariot, whom Ralegh, as soon as he had come to Court, had employed as his scientific tutor. Hariot was then only twenty-one, but had since justified Ralegh's early recognition of his quality by winning a European reputation, and his discoveries were later to inspire Descartes himself in algebra and pure mathematics.... The sorcerer Dr. Dee, another suspect friend of Ralegh's and visitor to Sherborne and Cerne Abbas, had been the first ever to give lectures on Euclid... But they did him no credit with the many English who held that Euclid's "pricks and lines" were symbols of magic. Ralegh's closest friend in the group was a Fellow of Baliol, Lawrence Keymis, who combined learning with a passion for seafaring and exploration, especially if it were with Ralegh. Another member was the enormously wealthy scholar, the Earl of Northumberland; he was collecting a vast library, believed to consist chiefly of forbidden knowledge; made sulphurous chemical experiments in pursuit of alchemy, and was known as the Wizard Earl.

Attempts were made by local people to bring the coterie to court on charges of atheism, but the county court dismissed the charges. However, allusions to "The School of Night" were made in *Love's Labour's Lost*, first published in 1598, "Newly corrected and augmented by W. Shakespeare." The play, a literary *tour de force*, was undoubtedly written by Marlowe, and we shall make our case in an ensuing chapter.

But what concerns us now is the reputation that Marlowe gained of being an atheist because of his connection with the Ralegh group. What is important to remember is that even though Marlowe no doubt entertained his fellow intellectuals, he was also an agent of the government and probably reported back to Walsingham and Burghley what went on there. It appeared that the government was very much interested in what the Earl of Northumberland was up to.

Who was Henry Percy, 9th Earl of Northumberland? Born in 1564, he was the same age as Marlowe. At age 21 he inherited the Earldom. We get a very lively and detailed picture of the Earl in *The Reckoning*. Nicholl writes (p. 196):

> He was a young nobleman with a profoundly Catholic pedigree. The Percys were one of England's premier Catholic families. Henry's grandfather, Sir Thomas Percy, was executed for his share in the Pilgrimage of Grace. His uncle Thomas, the 7th earl, took part in the revolt of the Northern Earls and was executed in 1572. His father steered a more moderate course, but he too became ensnared in conspiracy and died in the Tower.

Despite the Earl's strong Catholic family tradition, he was brought up in the Protestant faith. But Catholics saw the young aristocrat as a possible recruit to their intrigues in favor of Mary Queen of Scots. When he was eighteen and studying in Paris, Charles Paget, the Catholic exile, discretely tried to see if the future Earl had any inclination to accept his family's old faith. The young man made it clear that he had no interest in being converted to Catholicism. Nevertheless, Sir Henry Cobham, the English ambassador, became suspicious of Paget's activities and informed Walsingham.

Both Walsingham and Burghley were concerned that activist, conspirato-

rial Catholics would try to recruit the future Earl to their enterprises. Nicholl writes (p. 198):

> In the autumn of 1583, a Catholic named Francis Throckmorton was arrested. Papers found in his study, and confessions extracted on the rack, furnished Walsingham with evidence of a planned Franco-Spanish invasion, and a list of English Catholics ready to assist them. Chief on the list was the old Earl of Northumberland, Percy's father. Further guilt by association was added by the dubious Paget, who had recently visited the Earl under a false name. The Earl was placed under house-arrest at Petworth, and later imprisoned. On 21 June 1585, he was found dead in the Tower, shot through the heart with a "dag." The official verdict was suicide, but there was no lack of other versions. Henry Percy was still in Paris when news came of his father's death. He returned to England immediately, and was installed to the Earldom of Northumberland.

Now that the young Lord Percy had become the 9th Earl of Northumberland, one of the wealthiest men in England, it was feared by Walsingham and Burghley that he would seek revenge for his father's death and join the Catholic conspirators. It was now more important than ever to have someone close to the Earl in order to know what he was up to.

In 1586, during the height of the Babington plot, Thomas Watson decided to dedicate his latest poem, *Helenae Raptus*, to the twenty-two year old Earl. Watson had been in Paris in 1581–82, working for Ambassador Cobham, while the future Earl was also there. Since the English community in Paris was small, the two men might have become acquainted. Did Walsingham in 1586 suggest to Watson that he become part of the Earl's literary circle by the simple device of a dedication? It is likely that he did.

The Earl's interest in poetry was well known. He had amassed a huge library of over 2,000 books at Petworth. His interests also included science, mathematics, and philosophy, referred to in the popular mind as "magick," from which he gained the title "Wizard Earl." It was through these interests that he attracted the attention of Sir Walter Ralegh. Nicholl writes (p. 195):

> Ralegh, the great Elizabethan adventurer, courtier and poet, was an older man, and different in temper, but there was a marriage of minds between them, with an intermixing of mercenary motives: Northumberland was deeply wealthy, Ralegh more a charismatic freelancer. There is evidence of their growing friendship from the first years of Northumberland's accession to the Earldom in 1585.

The two men exchanged gifts, gambled together at cards, smoked together, rode together, and no doubt also discussed and speculated together. Ralegh had lost favor with the Queen, who was now mesmerized by the handsome Essex.

It is probable that Marlowe found his way into the Ralegh-Northumberland circle through Watson. Marlowe had left Cambridge in 1587 and had made a hit in London with *Tamburlaine*. Walsingham probably thought that two spies in the circle were better than one. And there is no doubt that Marlowe's intelligence and talent intrigued them all. But, apparently, it also got him the reputation of being an atheist.

14

Marlowe and Sir Walter Ralegh

Many biographers have written of Marlowe's connection with the School of Night, that circle of intellectuals and free-thinking scholars that gathered around Sir Walter Ralegh at Durham House at the edge of the Thames. But one biographer contends that Marlowe never actually met Ralegh. So what are we to believe? We know that in the 1580s Ralegh wrote a satiric reply to Marlowe's popular lyric poem, *The Passionate Shepherd to His Love.* Marlowe had written the poem while still at Cambridge and under the influence of Ovid. It reads:

Come live with me, and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove,
That Vallies, groves, hills and fields,
Woods, or steepy mountain yields.

And we will sit upon the Rocks,
Seeing the Shepherds feed their flocks,
By shallow Rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sing Madrigals.

And I will make thee beds of Roses,
And a thousand fragrant posies,
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle,
Embroidered all with leaves of Myrtle.

A gown made of the finest wool,
Which from our pretty Lambs we pull,
Fair lined slippers for the cold:
With buckles of the purest gold.

A belt of straw, and Ivy buds,
With Coral clasps and Amber studs,
And if these pleasures may thee move,
Come live with me, and be my love.

The Shepherd Swains shall dance and sing,
For thy delight each May-morning,
If these delights thy mind may move;
Then live with me, and be my love.

Obviously, this was a poem about romantic young love written by a very young poet. But Ralegh's decision to write a reply was no doubt motivated by a desire to teach young Marlowe something about real life. Ralegh was twelve years older than Marlowe, and his direct and personal response indicates that he indeed knew the poet and enjoyed the friendship. Ralegh's poem is entitled *The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd.* It reads:

If all the world and love were young
And truth in every Shepherd's tongue,
These pretty pleasures might me move,
To live with thee, and be thy love.

Time drives the flocks from field to fold,
When Rivers rage, and Rocks grow cold,
And Philomel becometh dumb,
The rest complains of cares to come.

The flowers do fade, and wanton fields,
To wayward winter reckoning yields,
A honey tongue, a heart of gall,
Is fancy's spring, but sorrow's fall.

Thy gowns, thy shoes, thy beds of Roses,
Thy cap, thy kirtle, and thy posies,
Soon break, soon wither, soon forgotten:
In folly ripe, in reason rotten.

Thy belt of straw and Ivy buds,
Thy Coral Clasps and Amber studs,
All these in me no means can move,
To come to thee, and be thy love.

But could youth last, and love still breed,
Had joys no date, nor age no need,
Then these delights my mind might move,
To live with thee, and be thy love.

A serious, yet amusing response, which must have pleased Marlowe who probably took it as a token of friendship and appreciation. How well Marlowe knew Ralegh, we have no way of knowing, but it is evident that he saw in Ralegh the aspiring hero of the Elizabethan world.

Ralegh was indeed one of the great tragic heroes of his time. Born in Devonshire in 1552, when Bloody Mary was still Queen, he grew up in a family of staunch Protestants. His father, a country gentleman who farmed land he didn't own, had been married three times, and his mother had been married twice, thus providing young Walter with many half-brothers and sisters, and cousins.

Living on the coast, there was a strong maritime tradition among the families. When Walter was barely in his teens, his half-brother Humphrey wrote his *Discourse* in which he suggested how English ships might reach India and China by way of a north-west passage through a sea on the north side of Labrador. The idea of such exploration fascinated Walter.

Walter got his first taste of war when, at the age of 16, he volunteered to help the Huguenots in France fight against their Catholic persecutors. His cousin, Gawain Champernowne, had married the daughter of a French nobleman, a leader of the Huguenot cause. The war was fraught with massacres and murders, and when Walter returned to England, he was both older and wiser.

In 1572, he registered at Oriel College, Oxford. He gained a reputation for high spirits and riotous behavior. In 1575, he registered at the Middle Temple. But he didn't study law. He seems to have used it as a means of social enhancement. In 1576, his first book of poetry was published. In London he frequented the circle of his half-brother Humphrey Gilbert. There he became acquainted with George Gascoigne, a soldier poet who wrote satirical verse and had as patron Robert, Earl of Leicester, the favorite of the Queen.

By then Ralegh had decided that he would pursue the favor of the Queen. On June 11, 1578, Queen Elizabeth granted Humphrey Gilbert a patent "to discover, searche, find out and view such remote heathen and barbarous landes, countries and territories not actually possessed by any Christian prince or people." Walter was to take part in the enterprise. After a false start in September 1578, a second attempt in November was made to brave the horrible weather. Again, the ships returned to Dartmouth harbor. Ralegh, however, in command of the Falcon, refusing to turn back found himself tempest tossed in the Bay of Biscay amid Spanish shipping. There was a sharp battle in which Ralegh's ship fared badly, but he manage to get back to Devon in one piece. If anything, he had proven that he had courage and tenacity.

Ralegh was also an imposing figure, six-foot-tall, slender, muscular and wearing flamboyant clothes. He wore jewels, a pearl in one ear, and a dark pointed beard. Everything about him radiated energy and ambition. And he was ostentatiously proud.

He fought a duel with Sir Thomas Perrott and wound up in Fleet Prison for a week. He then got involved with another fracas that landed him in Marshalsea Prison where he found his cousin Arthur Gorges also incarcerated. Gorges, also a soldier poet, collaborated with Ralegh on many literary projects. Their friendship developed into a lifelong partnership. But another friendship proved to be poisonous. Robert Lacey writes (p. 21):

> Returning to London after the abortive expedition of 1578–9 Walter Ralegh fell in with the set that centered on the libertine Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford. He was an unstable young man, and although related to Lord Burghley, his touchstone was not the prudence of the great councillor but the erratic temper of companions like Charles Arundel and Henry Howard, crypto–Catholics who vented their spleen against the Protestant establishment with anti-social antics, deliberately calculated to shock.

It seems that Lord Burghley and Sir Francis Walsingham were worried about the Earl of Oxford's friends and sent Ralegh on a mission of infiltration to find out what was really going on in Oxford's circle. Ralegh did so well on his mission that he became one of the Earl's trusted friends. When the Earl got into a confrontation with Sir Philip Sidney by insulting him at a tennis game, Ralegh acted as an intermediary and prevented a duel. But in a short time Ralegh and the Earl became bitter enemies.

Ralegh was rewarded for his work by being appointed Esquire of the Body Extraordinary, a minor court position. He was then sent to Ireland in the summer of 1580 to help facilitate the English colonization of the country. In a short time he found himself involved in guerrilla warfare which he managed to suppress with some ruthless massacres. By the autumn of 1581, Ireland had been sufficiently pacified so that Ralegh could return to London as an expert on Irish affairs.

Legend has it that soon after his return, Ralegh had the occasion to make a great impression on the Queen by placing his handsome cloak on a muddy puddle so that the Queen could walk across it without wetting her feet. And pretty soon he became her favorite.

Ralegh had cast a spell over the Queen. He delighted her with his impressive physical presence, his poetry, his seductive conversation, his wisdom. And she rewarded him with money, jewels and real estate. In April 1584 he was given the leases of two estates belonging to All Souls College at Oxford, and in the following year he was granted the farm of wines, the right to charge every vintner one pound a year for the right to retail wine. This source of income became the foundation of his wealth. The Queen also bestowed upon Ralegh the use of one of the great palaces in London, Durham House, with its turreted walls rising out of the Thames.

The year 1584 was indeed a bonanza year for Ralegh. He was given licence to export woollen broadcloths, he became a member of Parliament, representing Devon county, and the Queen knighted him so that he was now Sir Walter Ralegh.

The Queen also satisfied Ralegh's ambition to build an English empire in the new world with a new grant of Letters Patent. Ralegh's half-brother Humphrey Gilbert had been lost at sea during an expedition in 1583, and Ralegh was determined to carry on Humphrey's great legacy of exploration.

Ralegh's aim was to establish a permanent English colony in North America, which he would name Virginia, after the Virgin Queen. It was at Durham House that Ralegh gathered the privateering captains and pilots who would carry out the expedition. But the three men Ralegh relied on most for much needed scientific and navigational knowledge were Richard Hakluyt, Thomas Hariot, and Dr. John Dee. Although by 1584 the Spanish had already established an overseas empire in the Western Hemisphere, this was just the beginning for the English. Ralegh's expedition would be the vanguard of England's great colonial enterprise in the century ahead.

Richard Hakluyt, a clergyman, had been inspired by his older namesake cousin, who referred the younger man to the 107th Psalm, "They which go down to the sea in ships and occupy great waters, these see the works of the lord, and his wonders in the deep." In 1582, Hakluyt published his first book, *Divers Voyages Touching the Discoveries of America*, which stirred interest in expeditions like Ralegh's. Thomas Hariot was a mathematical genius from Oxford whose scientific talents provided the expedition with an observer who could bring back vivid, accurate reports of what they found and saw. He also provided Ralegh with the practical mathematics involved in problems of navigation and astronomy. Lacey writes (p. 55):

> Up onto the leads of Durham House in 1590 Hariot took his optical instruments and worked out new techniques for charting the stars. He was a friend of the playwright Christopher Marlowe, the psychic ambitions of whose Dr. Faustus was so akin to Thomas Hariot's own intellectual appetite.

On April 27, 1584, thirty-six years before the Pilgrims landed in America in 1620, two ships sailed out of Plymouth harbor to map out the route and prepare the way for the main group. In July 1584, Ralegh's men landed on Hatarask Island, taking possession of it for the Queen. On their return, they brought two Indians who agreed to travel to England to help Hariot prepare a translation of their language.

Ralegh himself never traveled to Virginia. The Queen wanted him to remain at her side. On April 9, 1585, the colonizing expedition set sail, with Thomas Hariot and his artist John White on board. They reached Virginia toward the end of June 1585. Lacey writes (p. 64):

> All was set fair for Sir Walter Ralegh's colony. Through the early weeks of August 1585 his 108 settlers worked at building themselves houses and defences on Roanoke Island where they could spend the winter, and at the end of the month Richard Grenville set sail for England in the *Tyger*, his task completed. He had landed his Virginians with food, stores and cattle on a promising site and could now hand over the settlement as a going concern to Governor Ralph Lane. He had, furthermore, by taking those four Spanish prizes in the Caribbean done much to set the finances of the whole project on a credit footing, and one more prize he took on the way home produced a solid dividend for all Ralegh's investors.

While all of this was going on, Marlowe, at age 21, was still at Cambridge and involved in spying for Walsingham. He was sent to Rheims in July 1585 on a mission to the Catholic seminary. In this mission he was probably supervised by Tom Watson.

Meanwhile, the only documentation we have of what William Shakespeare was up to is the birth of his twins, Hamnet and Judith, baptized on February 2, 1585. His wife, Anne Hathaway, had given birth to their daughter Susanna on May 26, 1583. Their marriage had taken place on November 28, 1582. Since all of the baptisms took place at the Holy Trinity Church at Stratford, it is believed that Shakespeare was probably working for his father and living in Stratford during that time.

15

Ralegh's Coterie of Scholars

Much has been written about the free-thinking intellectuals that gathered around Ralegh at Durham House and at Sherborne. While most of the work and discussion revolved around the expeditions, scholars have speculated that the discussions also involved religion. In fact, Marlowe's reputation as an atheist and blasphemer stems from reports about the goings on among the free-thinkers. To what extent these reports truly represent what was actually said in these free-wheeling discussions, or were simply attempts by enemies to defame both Ralegh and Marlowe will forever be unknown.

Although Ralegh was also a poet, his interests seem to have been mainly scientific. He saw no conflict between his interest in science and his devotion to his Protestant faith. In his *Treatise of the Soul*, Ralegh wrote, "The mind in searching causes is never quiet till it come to God, and the will never is satisfied with any good till it comes to the immortal goodness." Hardly the words of an atheist. And these sentiments would later be iterated in Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus*.

Yet, these accusations would lead to Ralegh's final and ignominious downfall and to Marlowe's extinction as the persona Christopher Marlowe.

Meanwhile, Ralegh's colony in Virginia suffered greatly during the winter of 1585–86, and there were doubts about its survival. But in the spring, Governor Ralph Lane set about searching for a more suitable site for settlement. Chesapeake Bay offered the best prospects. But Lane and his men were beset with Indian belligerence, which they were fortunately able to overcome.

In June the fleet of Sir Francis Drake, fresh from its privateering triumphs in the Caribbean, arrived at the colony and offered help to the beleaguered settlers. After a huge, disastrous storm, they all chose to return to England. Thus, when Sir Richard Grenville's supply ship arrived two days later, he found the colony empty. Grenville decided to leave on Roanoke a holding party of eighteen men with provisions for two years to guard the settlement until a new group of colonists could arrive. Despite these setbacks, Ralegh was still determined to create for England a colonial empire in the New World as substantial as the one created by Spain. Lacey writes (p. 83):

> Through the autumn and winter of 1586, Walter Ralegh worked on this new joint stock basis, offering 500 acres to every man prepared to settle seriously in Virginia and to build up a permanent community there with wives, children and its own rights of self-government.... The two great chroniclers of Virginia, White and Hariot, had brought back a mass of documentation with them from Roanoke and while one busied himself with the preparations for Ralegh's new venture of which he would be governor, the other set himself to collate all they had recorded into a work that could both stand as a monument to the first Roanoke settlement and encourage support for its successor. For over a year Thomas Hariot worked to produce the volume he modestly entitled *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia.*

Hariot predicted great wealth for the colony with its abundant supply of cedar wood, pitch, tar, turpentine and sassafras—a bark derivative believed to cure venereal disease. But the most important product of all was tobacco thought to have great health benefits. Hariot had brought back the clay pipes which the Indians used for smoking. The habit caught on rapidly, and smoking became quite fashionable at court. The Queen was said to have remarked that there were men "who had turned gold into smoke, but Ralegh was the first to turn smoke into gold."

In 1586, two of Ralegh's smaller privateers returned from a successful run in the Azores with an important prisoner, Don Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa, governor of the Spanish possessions in Patagonia. Rather than ransom his prisoner, Ralegh thought that he could use him as a go-between with King Philip. He offered to sell the king two of his vessels and to thwart Don Antonio of Portugal from getting assistance from Queen Elizabeth to help free his country from Spanish domination. But the king decided he could not trust Ralegh, and the scheme failed.

In June 1586, Royal letter patents named Ralegh as head of a group of West Countrymen who would colonize the southern Irish counties of Cork and Waterside. In February, 1587, Ralegh secured a Privy Seal warrant giving him title to 42,000 acres. Both Walsingham and Burghley believed that the best way to defend England was by colonizing southern Ireland with Englishmen.

By the spring of 1587 all of Ralegh's energies were devoted to another expedition to Virginia, this time to establish a community known as the City of Ralegh at Chesapeake Bay. Hakluyt had advised Ralegh in 1586, "Your best planting will be about the bay of the Chesapeans."

The expedition, with 89 men, 17 women, eleven children, and the Indian Manteo, set sail from Plymouth on May 8, 1587 under the command of John White. When they arrived at Roanoke on July 22, 1587, they found the houses standing but the 18 men left by Grenville missing. What exactly happened to them has not been satisfactorily explained to this day. Nevertheless, the new colonists installed themselves safely in Roanoke. It was too late in the season to proceed to the Chesapeake Bay. John White then set out for England, and after much difficulty reached Plymouth in November. He gave Ralegh a list of needed supplies for the infant colony. A relief expedition was planned for the spring of 1588.

But the threat of the Spanish Armada forced a postponement. In 1587, the Queen had appointed Ralegh captain of her guard and gave him the land of the traitor Babington, making Ralegh a landowner with manors in Lincolnshire, Derbyshire, and Nottinghamshire. In return Ralegh gave the Queen the *Ark Royal*, which he had built in 1586 as the most advanced fighting vessel of the time. Although the ship took part in the war against the Armada, the Queen did not want Ralegh to go to sea. Instead, she put him in charge of preparing England for the invasion. The country's great vulnerability was in her land defenses.

Thus, Ralegh spent 1587 and 1588 mobilizing a military force along the coast that would defend England against invasion. The defeat of the Armada marked the high spot of Elizabeth's reign and marked a watershed for Ralegh. It saw the end of Ralegh's meteoric career after which the soaring projectory flattened out.

Meanwhile, at court, the young, handsome Earl of Essex had become the Queen's new favorite. It created a rivalry between the two favorites. Essex had been introduced to the Queen in 1585 at the age of 17 by his stepfather, the Earl of Leicester, the Queen's oldest favorite. Essex had fought beside Sir Philip Sidney in the Netherlands where the latter sustained a fatal wound. He was determined to gain the same kind of reputation for heroism that adorned Sidney. After the Armada victory Elizabeth made Essex a Knight of the Garter.

Elizabeth seemed to enjoy the rivalry of the two men. She thrived on competitions of affection. Ralegh found that life with Elizabeth was no longer the thoroughly enjoyable experience that it had been before Essex had entered the scene. And so, in the summer of 1589 he went to Ireland to oversee his lands and attend to matters in the running of the Irish colonies.

In Ireland, Ralegh also visited the poet Edmund Spenser, then living some thirty miles from Ralegh's house. The poet was working on *The Faerie Queene*, the epic poem which Sir Philip Sidney and the Earl of Leicester had sponsored. Ralegh needed the friendship of the poet for two reasons: he wanted Spenser's evaluation of his own poetry which dealt with his disenchantment with life at court, and he wanted to offer Spenser his own services. Thus, when *The Faerie Queene* was published, it was prefaced by two sonnets, one by Ralegh to Spenser and one by Spenser to Ralegh.

When Ralegh returned to England toward the end of 1589, he brought Spenser with him, introduced him to the Queen, who was flattered by the compliment that *The Faerie Queene* paid her and granted its author a pension of 50 pounds.

In 1590, Ralegh fell in love. Its object: Elizabeth Throckmorton, one of the Queen's maids-of-honour. Elizabeth was the daughter of Sir Nicholas Throckmorton, the Queen's first ambassador to Paris. Meanwhile, the Earl of Essex secretly married the widow of Sir Philip Sidney, who was also the daughter of Sir Francis Walsingham. When the Queen heard of the couple's marriage she was furious and banished Essex from court until she could get over her great annoyance.

Ralegh and Elizabeth Throckmorton carried on an impassioned love affair in secret until secrecy was no longer possible. In the summer of 1592, Bess conceived, and the couple were married at a secret ceremony that fall.

How does Marlowe fit into all of this? Crucial to Ralegh's ability to deal with the complex problems of colonization was the need to draw on the knowledge and expertise of the scholars he gathered around him at Durham House. Indeed, since he, himself, was unable to go to Virginia, he was totally dependent on the detailed and accurate reportage of Hariot and White for a proper evaluation of the colony's potential. Thus, the legend that Ralegh carried on a "School of Night" belies the simple truth: the gatherings at Durham House were a vital part of Ralegh's plans for colonizing North America. It was more of a scientific academy dealing with the problems of navigation and astronomy than a coterie of pagan mystics. Yet, the legend persists.

Was Marlowe among the scholars at Durham House? In 1587 Marlowe received his Master of Arts degree at Cambridge after an intervention by the Privy Council. He had also been on missions for Walsingham. It was also the year in which *Tamburlaine I* was staged. It is believed that it was in 1587 that Marlowe entered the Ralegh circle and tried smoking the tobacco that Hariot had brought back to England the year before. He had probably been introduced to Ralegh by Tom Watson. Marlowe, 23, full of ambition and independent views, proud of the success of *Tamburlaine I*, no doubt said things about religion that were meant to shock and draw out from his audience their own private sentiments which would be reported back to Walsingham and Burghley.

In 1588, the year of the Armada, *Tamburlaine II* was successfully staged. Also, for the first time, Marlowe was accused of atheism by Robert Greene in his *Perimedes*. Who was Robert Greene?

16

Who Was Robert Greene?

The Eleventh Edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (Vol. XII, pages 539–41) devotes more than two whole pages to Robert Greene, indicating that he held a place of some notoriety among Elizabethan authors as a dramatist, novelist, and pamphleteer. It is believed that he was born in Norwich in 1560, making him four years older than Marlowe, and died in 1592, one year before Marlowe's exit from the scene. It is assumed that Marlowe had met him at Cambridge, which Greene had entered at St. John's College as a sizar in 1575, obtained his B.A. in 1579, and an M.A. in 1583 from Clare Hall.

Marlowe had entered Corpus Christi in December 1580, and thus the two men may have become known to one another during that three-year period. It is interesting to note that Marlowe was recruited into the Secret Service as a student while Robert Greene was not. His life at the university was, in his own words, spent "among wags as lewd as himself, with whom he consumed the flower of his youth." At Cambridge Greene also became friends with Thomas Nashe.

Between the years 1578 and 1583 Greene traveled extensively in France, Germany, Poland and Denmark. While at Cambridge he gained the enmity of Gabriel Harvey, who wrote of Greene's "ruffianly hair, unseemly apparel and more unseemly behaviour; his vainglorious bearing; his monstrous swearing; his impious profanity with sacred texts; his other blasphemous and scandalous raving." Hardly the kind of unsavory fellow that Marlowe would have wanted to get close to. Marlowe had his eye on those above him, the nobility, and he was more likely to have befriended Burghley's charge, the Earl of Southampton than a neer-do-well like Greene.

Nevertheless, Greene managed to achieve some popular success with his writings. He married in 1586 but turned out to be an unfaithful husband. He was well known in the alehouses. Hugh Ross Williamson writes of him (pp. 151–52):

> However unsatisfactory Greene's life, his writing was successful enough. He was a born journalist with an intuitive perception of what the public wanted. His novels

were best-sellers. He was equally adept at love-romances and slightly fictionised tales of the underworld of London. His satirical pamphlets were snapped up as soon as they were advertised....

Greene had not so far attempted a play. He considered that as a University man it was beneath his dignity to write for the common stage. Also, he disliked actors. But the success of *Tamburlaine* bred second thoughts and Marlowe was gratified to notice that he diligently attended every performance of the play that Henslowe put on. Marlowe's attitude, however, changed considerably when the reason for Greene's interest became apparent. As a result of his intensive study, Greene constructed an Oriental conquest-play punctuated by perpetual slaughter in exact imitation of *Tamburlaine* which he called *Alphonsus King of Aragon* and in which the scenes, the plot, the versification and the general style were as close an approximation to Marlowe's as he could manage.

But it was a flop. And we can imagine that what he wrote about Marlowe was the result of his own jealousy and envy. On March 31, 1588, Greene registered his pamphlet, *Perimedes the Blacksmith*, at the Stationers' Hall. In it he says that the reason why his imitation of *Tamburlaine* was a flop was because

I could not make my verses jet upon the stage in tragical buskins, every word filling the mouth like the fa-burden of Bow Bell, daring God out of heaven with the atheist Tamburlan, or blaspheming with the mad priest of the sun. But let me rather pocket up the ass at Diogenes's hand than wantonly set out such impious instances of intolerable poetry, such mad and scoffing poets that have prophetical spirits as bred of Merlin's race. If there be any in England that set the end of scholarism in an English blank verse, I think it is the humour of a novice that tickles them with self-love, or so much frequenting the hothouse.

This bitter tirade against Marlowe and his blank verse was the first to intimate that the author of *Tamburlaine* was an atheist. Greene was above writing "such impious instances of intolerable poetry." Obviously, he wished he could, but he simply did not have the genius. As for "the mad priest of the sun," Charles Nicoll believes that Greene was referring to the Italian philosopher-mathematician, Giordano Bruno, an apostate Dominican, who had visited England in 1583–1585, and created a sensation at Oxford by his lectures on pantheism, God as the "world soul," and the cosmological theories of Nicolas Copernicus, the Polish astronomer. Nicholl writes (p. 207):

This volatile, heretical Italian, with his sun-centered magical religion, is the man Greene describes as the "mad priest of the sun." To the reader of 1588, I think, the identification would be obvious. This riddling reference actually turns out to be part of this same association between Marlowe and magic. Marlowe is an admirer of the mad priest Bruno, just as he is a poet "bred of Merlin's race."

Copernicus (1473–1543) had challenged the earth-centered cosmology of Ptolemy, the prevalent doctrine that the earth was the center of the universe, and that the sun revolved around the earth. Copernicus, a master astronomer, had studied the heavens and concluded that the sun was the center of the known universe, and that the earth revolved around the sun. In 1543 he announced his sun-centered cosmology to the world.

While in England, Bruno found ready audiences among such influential people as Sir Philip Sidney and the 9th Earl of Northumberland. The Earl became an avid collector of Bruno texts, and six of them can be seen in the Northumberland libraries at Petworth House and Alnwick Castle. Back in Italy in 1592, Bruno was tried by the Inquisition, refused to recant, and was burned at the stake as a heretic in 1600.

It is believed that Bruno was the model Marlowe used for Dr. Faustus. Although it is not known exactly when Dr. Faustus was written, circumstantial evidence seems to indicate that it followed Tamburlaine. If Marlowe had been part of the Northumberland circle in the late 1580s, he would have known about Bruno, and he would have been impressed by the Faustus story which was first published in Germany in 1588.

But getting back to Robert Greene, there is one other reason why he is considered so important to our chronicle. Shakespeare scholars believe that the first published reference to William Shakespeare appeared in Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit*, which was published shortly after Greene's death. We know of the sad circumstances of Greene's death through accounts of the time. Nicholl writes (p. 44):

> As Greene lay dying in Dowgate in the summer of 1592, he dashed off a series of fraught confessions, complaints and reminiscences. In one of these—*Greene's Groatsworth of Wit Bought with a Million of Repentence*, published posthumously in September 1592—he addressed some words to three playwrights, his "fellow scholars about this city." The first of these was Marlowe. He is not actually named, but everyone knew who was meant when Greene addressed the "famous gracer of tragedians," just as they recognised the identity of the other two writers addressed, Thomas Nashe and George Peele. Greene urges Marlowe to turn aside from "diabolical atheism" and "pestilent Machiavilian policy."

By 1592, Marlowe had written *Dr. Faustus, The Jew of Malta, The Massacre at Paris*, and *Edward II*. In none of these plays did Marlowe indicate that he was an atheist. Nor is it likely that Marlowe would have confided his private religious views to someone like Greene who lived in a slum among petty criminals. Marlowe was the last to get involved in a literary dogfight with Greene. Marlowe, the genius that he was, aspired to reach immortal fame through his superb writing, and Greene was intensely jealous of his success.

The full title of Greene's death-bed pamphlet was *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit, Bought with a Million of Repentence. Describing the Folly of Youth, the Falseness of Makeshift Flatterers, the Misery of Neglect, and Mischiefs of Deceiving Courtesans.* Shakespeare scholar S. Schoenbaum describes the story as told by Greene (p. 23):

> The narrative recounts the adventures of Roberto, an impoverished graduate who is hired to write plays by a gorgeously attired actor who has grown rich on the labours of scholars. Roberto thus becomes "an arch play-making poet"; he takes up with dissolute companions, he learns the sharp practices of the underworld, he drinks and wenches. Abruptly the fictional persona—in any event a thin disguise—

is dropped, and Greene directly offers his readers the fruits of his repentence in the form of a series of moral imperatives. This is followed by a letter to three of his "fellow scholars about this city": Marlowe and (probably) Nashe and Peele.

Greene's Groatsworth of Wit was largely autobiographical, a sort of literary last will and testament, written by Greene on his death bed. In it, he thrashed out against those in the theater business who had used him and then left him to die in poverty. He was referring to the actor-managers who profited greatly from the work of writers like himself. In those days, a dramatist sold his play to the actors' company for a sum of a few pounds. Once sold it became the property of the players' company. A much-performed play could make an actor-manager wealthy while its author lived in poverty. That was the case with Alleyn and Burbage, the leading actor-managers of the time, who became quite rich and often lent playwrights money at interest. And so, in this last testament, Greene bitterly lashed out at Edward Alleyn whom he disliked intensely. He addressed his fellow playwrights (B.H. Blackwell, Oxford, 1919, pp. 72–73):

> Is it not strange, that I, to whom they all have been beholding: is it not like that you, to whom they all have been beholding, shall (were yee in that case as I am now) be both at once of them forsaken? Yes trust them not: for there is an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his *Tygers hart wrapt in a Players hyde*, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blanke verse as the best of you: and being an absolute Iohannes fac totum, is in his owne conceit the onely Shake-scene in a countrey. O that I might intreat your rare wits to be imployed in more profitable courses: & let those Apes imitate your past excellence, and never more acquaint them with your admired intentions. I know the best husband of you all will never prove an Userer, and the kindest of them all will never prove a kind nurse: yet whilest you may, seeke you better Maisters; for it is pittie men of such rare wits, should be subject to the pleasure of such groomes.

It is obvious that the Shake-scene is the actor Alleyn, the 26-year-old upstart superstar, who had achieved great notoriety as Tamburlaine, Barabas, and Faustus. He could indeed shake a scene with his bombast and at the same time become wealthy as part owner of a theatre. If we refer to Henslowe's Diary, which begins in 1591, we can see why Greene had reason to fulminate against "the painted monsters." In 1591, two of Greene's plays, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bongay* and *Orlando Furioso*, were performed by Lord Strange's Men of whom Alleyn played all or most of the heroes.

In that same year, and well into 1592 and 1593, there were numerous performances of *The Jew of Malta* and *Henry VI*, both of which proved to be enormously popular. Which is why Shakespeare scholars have stretched credibility to the limit by trying to prove that William Shakespeare was already writing plays in 1591. But Henslowe makes no mention of authors. He only enters the names of plays and how much they earned at each performance.

Who wrote *Henry VI, Part One*? It was never published in Shakespeare's lifetime. But since it is included in the First Folio of 1623, Stratfordian scholars have been forced to believe that Shakespeare actually wrote it. But they all have reservations. Harold Bloom writes (p. 43):

> Attempts by critics to ascribe much of *Henry VI, Part One*, to Robert Greene or George Peele, very minor dramatists, do not persuade me, though I would be pleased to believe that other botchers had been at work in addition to the very young Shakespeare. What I hear, though, is Marlowe's mode and rhetoric appropriated with great zest and courage but with little independence, as though the novice dramatist were wholly intoxicated by the *Tamburlaine* plays and *The Jew of Malta*. The laments for Henry V, whose funeral begins the play, sound rather like dirges for Tamburlaine the Great.

Bloom gives the impression that "the very young Shakespeare" was quite younger than Marlowe, when in fact they were the same age. A.L. Rowse writes (p. 757):

> The dominant influence observable again and again in *Henry VI* is Marlowe's. He had patented this grandiloquent poetic diction, in splendid blank verse, in *Tamburlaine*. The actor copied it.... The only text of the *First Part of King Henry VI* is that of the Folio.... This is almost certainly Shakespeare's first play....
>
> Though there are touches from Holinshed, the dominant theme in shaping the *Henry VI* plays came from Edward Hall's book, *The Union of the two noble and illustrious families York and Lancaster*, of which there had been several editions in the 1540's.

My own theory about the *Henry VI* plays is that they were written by Marlowe when he was under the influence of Philip Sidney's sister Mary, the Countess of Pembroke, who believed that English dramas should follow the formula set by the French dramatist Robert Garnier. Indeed, she may have supported Marlowe financially while he wrote the three plays. Margaret P. Hannay writes in her biography of the Countess (p. 119):

> By translating Robert Garnier's *Marc Antoine* and sponsoring Samuel Daniel's continuation in *Cleopatra*, the countess helped to naturalize Continental historical tragedy in England. A dozen works followed the closet drama form of Garnier, but far more significant was the use of historical drama as a privileged genre for political content, the use of "times past" to comment on current affairs.

We shall discuss the fascinating relationship between Marlowe and Mary Sidney in a later chapter.

Judging from the many performances of the *Henry VI* plays, my guess is that Marlowe offered them to Henslowe and Alleyn because of financial need. They were performed by the Countess's own theater group, Pembroke's Men. Sir Francis Walsingham had died on April 6, 1590, deeply in debt. Elizabeth's salary was not nearly enough to finance the spy-master's farflung intelligence network, and thus he paid his spies out of his own pocket.

For Marlowe, Walsingham's death obviously created a financial problem. But the Countess of Pembroke may have solved that problem temporarily.

As for Greene's reference to Shake-scene, it is clear that it had nothing to do with William Shakespeare whose biographers have been grasping at straws to provide the Stratfordian with some kind of history or credential as a writer before his name appears for the first time on a published work, *Venus and Adonis*, in 1593.

But there is also the matter of the quote from *Henry VI, Part III* (Act 1, Scene 4), "Tygers hart rapt in a Players hyde." Clearly, that is a reference to Alleyn. It comes from a scene in which York, played by Alleyn, denounces Queen Margaret as cruel and ruthless, "O tiger's heart rapt in a woman's hyde." Which means that the play was written before Greene died in September 1592.

And where was Shakespeare at that time? He was not among the Ralegh coterie, or the Northumberland set, nor among the University Wits. The seven years succeeding the birth of Hamnet and Judith in 1585 are a blank in Shakespeare's biography. Yet his biographers assert that by 1592 he had written the three *Henry VI* plays. Where did he write them, and where did he have access to Holinshed or Hall?

In addition, we know that Nashe, in *Pierce Pennilesse*, denounced the *Groatsworth of Wit* as "a scald, trivial, lying pamphlet." Henry Chettle, its publisher, assumed the responsibility for preparing Greene's badly written manuscript for the printer. In a preface to his *Kind-Heart's Dream*, which appeared in December 1592, Chettle confessed that Greene's "letter written to divers play-makers" had been "offensively by one or two of them taken." The two were probably Marlowe and Nashe. Chettle wrote:

> With neither of them that take offence was I acquainted, and with one of them I care not if never be. The other, whom at that time I did not so much spare as since I wish I had, for that as I have moderated the heat of living writers, and might have used my own discretion (especially in such a case, the author [Greene] being dead)—that I did not, I am sorry as if the original fault had been my fault, because myself have seen his demeanor no less civil than he excellent in the quality he professes. Besides, divers of worship have reported his uprightness of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writing, that approves his art?

Shakespeare scholars, again, construe that Chettle was talking about Shakespeare when it is obvious that he was talking about Nashe. And yet, in all of Greene's writings and in Chettle's commentaries, the name Shakespeare never appears.

17

Doctor Faustus

It is hard to believe that the man who wrote *Doctor Faustus* was an atheist. The play's entire premise is based on orthodox Christianity, in which Marlowe had been educated both at the King's School in Canterbury and at Corpus Christi, Cambridge. In fact, Corpus Christi was a hotbed of Calvinist Puritanism. And there is no doubt that Marlowe was greatly influenced by Calvin's doctrine of man's innate depraved nature.

John Calvin, the great French Protestant reformer, was born in 1509 and died in 1564, the very year of Marlowe's birth. It was during the reign of Bloody Mary (1553–58) that many of England's prominent Protestants took refuge on the continent, spending time with Calvin in Geneva. Calvin had been persecuted by the French king, had taken refuge in Switzerland, and wrote his monumental *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, published in 1536. He finally settled in Geneva, which became a magnet for English and Scotch reformers, including John Knox.

Calvin's doctrine that the monarch was subject to God's law was not very welcome among the absolute rulers in Europe. William Haller writes in *The Rise of Puritanism* (p. 8):

> The dynamic Pauline doctrine of faith, with its insistence on the overruling power of God, on the equality of men before God, and on the immanence of God in the individual soul, had long appealed to the English mind, and the struggle of the English people to secure their independence from foreign power as symbolized to them by the papacy had confirmed that appeal. What Calvinism did for them was to supply a current formulation of historic doctrine in lucid, trenchant terms, strikingly supported by the success of the state which Calvin's genius had called into being at Geneva. There in Geneva English Protestant churchmen, when driven from home by the vicissitudes of domestic religious politics, had found congenial refuge.... Thence they had issued that English version of the word which became commonly known as the Geneva Bible and which, completed in 1560, became the Bible of the Elizabethan populace, of the Scottish Reformation, and of the New England Pilgrims.

With the death of Bloody Mary in 1558 and the accession to the throne by Elizabeth, the exiles returned with the hope that Calvinist doctrine would influ-

ence the new queen. But she found it unpalatable. The Puritans wanted a simpler church, without the ostentatious accouterments of hierarchy. Elizabeth enjoyed the ceremonies and robes and being the titular head of the Anglican Church. But her two most important ministers, Walsingham and Burghley were Puritans at heart and did much to aid and defend Puritans when it was in their power to do so.

Doctor Faustus, which was probably written in 1598, after the triumph of *Tamburlaine I & II*, is not only one of the great plays of the Elizabethan era but also a lucid specimen of orthodox Christianity. Educated for six years to become a cleric, Marlowe knew the Bible so well that, had he wanted, he could have become the most eloquent preacher in the realm. Instead, he chose the stage as his pulpit and used his poetic genius to convey religious truth in a way that would astound his audience. In this compelling story, Marlowe dramatizes the conflict in the soul of a university intellectual who sells his soul to the devil for magical powers and earthly riches. Leo Kirschbaum in *The Plays of Christopher Marlowe* writes (pp. 102–103):

> The premises of basic Christianity are inherent in every line of *Doctor Faustus*. The doctrine of damnation pervades it.
>
> If the modern mind, for example, sees Marlowe's main character as the noble victim of a tyrannical Deity, it is simply being blind. On the contrary, God is exceedingly good in his gifts to the "hero," until the latter becomes the victim of his own insatiable desires—and even then God is willing to forgive if the magician repents. But Faustus willfully refuses all aid—and so goes down to damnation.

The average English illiterates who flocked to churches to hear stirring sermons were the same men that Marlowe was reaching through the theater. Haller writes (p. 32):

> The preachers no less than the playwrights had to give the Elizabethan and Jacobean public something approaching what it wanted.... They were to discover that their listeners, still keeping undiminished their zest for wit and rhetoric, took a livelier interest in sin itself than in its categories, in the psychology of spiritual struggle than in the abstract analysis of moral behavior or even the satirical exposure of vice and folly. Who that saw Tamburlaine, Faustus and Richard on the boards was more concerned with edifying identification of the sin of pride than with the proud souls of Tamburlaine, Faustus and Richard? Who that could enjoy the two-hour traffic of the stage with such figures, though he no doubt had his own private fears for the welfare of his soul, could be any longer inclined to see his own moral life adequately reflected in the seven deadly sins of medieval moral science? Men knew what it was to be sinners. They longed to know what they must do to be saved.

Marlowe's education gave him an advantage that other writers simply did not have. He knew the nature of man and he knew of the eternal struggle between good and evil, heaven and hell. And one will find that overwhelming awareness in all of the plays he wrote, including those attributed to William Shakespeare.

The source of Marlowe's dramatization was a book published in Germany in 1587, *Historia von D. Iohan Fausten*, in which a university intellectual gives

his soul to the devil in exchange for twenty-four years of earthly power. An English translation of the book was published in 1592 under the title *The Historie of the damnable life, and deserved death of Doctor John Faustus, Newly imprinted, and in convenient places imperfect matter amended ... and translated into English by P.F. Gent[leman].*

It is not known whether an earlier edition of the English translation was ever published. Thus, scholars have disagreed about the date Marlowe's play was written. Some scholars, who date it 1589, assume that Marlowe had obtained the book while on a mission in Germany and read it in German. Others believe that he got his story from the English translation. Indeed, he may have known the translator and had access to his manuscript before 1592.

In any case, we know that the story was adapted by Marlowe and made into a magnificent drama. The playwright had developed the ability to make his opening scenes as compelling as possible. In *Doctor Faustus,* the play opens with a Chorus providing us with a biographical background of our protagonist:

> Now is he born of parents base of stock
> In Germany within a town called Rhode;
> At riper years to Wittenberg he went
> Whereas his kinsmen chiefly brought him up.
> So much he profits in divinity
> That shortly he was graced with doctor's name,
> Excelling all, and sweetly can dispute
> In th' heavenly matters of theology;
> Till swoll'n with cunning, of a self-conceit,
> His waxen wings did mount above his reach
> And melting, Heavens conspired his overthrow!
> [11–21]

Wittenberg is also the university Hamlet attended. It is where Martin Luther (1483–1546) became a professor of theology in 1511. In 1517 he nailed his famous 95 theses to the church door at Wittenberg, attacking the corrupt practices of the papacy. Thus, it was at Wittenberg that the great Protestant Reformation got its start, which had a profound effect on England.

In Act One, Scene Two of Hamlet, the King tells Hamlet:

> ...For your intent
> In going back to school in Wittenberg,
> It is most retrograde to our desire.
> [114–116]

And his mother tells him:

> I pray thee stay with us, go not to Wittenberg.
> [121]

Hamlet decides to obey his mother. But why the reference to Wittenberg, if not to give Hamlet a characterization of intelligence and intellect? Marlowe had spent six years at Cambridge and intimately knew university life and the pedants imbued with intellectual pride.

When the chorus ends we find Faustus in his study musing over the various professions open to a university doctor: Logician, Physician, and Law, of which he says:

> This study fits a mercenary drudge
> Who aims at nothing but external trash,
> Too servile and illiberal for me.
> When all is done, divinity is best.
> [32–35]

But then he goes on to explore divinity as a profession:

> Jerome's Bible, Faustus, view it well.
> *Stipendum peccati mors est.* Ha! *Stipendum et cetera.* The reward of sin is death? That's hard: *Si peccasse negamus, fallimur, et nulla est in nobis veritas.* If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and there is no truth in us. Why, then belike, we must sin, and so consequently die.
>
> Ay, we must die an everlasting death.
> What doctrine call you this? *Che sera, sera:*
> What will be, shall be! Divinity, adieu!
> [36–44]

Where did Marlowe pick up the Italian colloquialism, "Che sera, sera"? Probably as a page with Philip Sidney in Italy.

As for Divinity, both Marlowe and Faustus knew their Bible well. But Faustus had other, more compelling interests:

> These metaphysics of magicians
> And necromantic books are heavenly;
> Lines, circles, letters, characters—
> Ay, these are those that Faustus most desires.
> O, what a world of profit and delight,
> Of power, of honor, and omnipotence
> Is promised to the studious artisan!
> All things that move between the quiet poles
> Shall be at my command; emperors and kings
> Are but obeyed in their several provinces,
> Nor can they raise the wind, or rend the clouds;
> But his dominion that exceeds in this
> Stretcheth as far as doth the mind of man:
> A sound magician is a demi-god!
> [45–57]

And so, Faustus would be as God, all-powerful and omnipotent. He is intoxicated with the idea, and he sends his servant Wagner to fetch Valdes and Cornelius who will teach him the black arts. Meanwhile, the Good Angel and the Bad Angel enter the scene, articulating the spiritual conflict inside Faustus. The Good Angel says:

> Oh Faustus, lay that damned book aside
> And gaze not on it lest it tempt thy soul

And heap God's heavy wrath upon thy head!
Read, read the Scriptures.
[65–68]

The Bad Angel urges Faustus to continue his quest:

Go forward Faustus, in that famous art
Wherein all nature's treasure is contained.
Be thou on earth as Jove in the sky,
Lord and commander of these elements!
[69–72]

Faustus goes on to muse on all of the wonderful things he will do with his magical powers. Valdes and Cornelius then enter the scene. He begs his friends to instruct him in the arts of magic, and they agree to do so. Cornelius tells Faustus: "The miracles that magic will perform Will make thee vow to study nothing else."

In Act 1, Scene 3, Faustus uses his newly acquired magical knowledge to conjure up the devil. Mephistophilis arrives. But he looks too ugly, and Faustus tells him to go and return as an old Franciscan friar. "The holy shape becomes a devil best," he says. Mephistophilis returns and asks Faustus, "What wouldst thou have me do?" Faustus replies:

I charge thee wait upon me whilst I live
To do whatever Faustus shall command,
Be it to make the moon drop from her sphere
Or the ocean to overwhelm the world.
Meph. I am a servant to great Lucifer
And may not follow thee without his leave.
No more than he commands must we perform.
Faust. Did not he charge thee to appear to me?
Meph. No, I came now hither of mine own accord.
Faust. Did not my conjuring raise thee? Speak.
Meph. That was the cause, but yet *per accidens:*
For when we hear one rack the name of God,
Abjure the Scriptures and his savior Christ,
We fly in hope to get his glorious soul.
Nor will we come unless he use such means
Whereby he is in danger to be damned.
Therefore the shortest cut for conjuring
Is stoutly to abjure the Trinity
And pray devoutly to the prince of hell.
[1.3.33–51]

In this striking conversational manner Marlowe is able to give his audience some real lessons in Christian theology. And it gets better when Faustus asks: "Tell me, what is that Lucifer thy lord?"

Meph. Arch-regent and commander of all spirits.
Faust. Was not that Lucifer an angel once?
Meph. Yes Faustus, and most dearly loved of God.

Faust. How comes it then that he is prince of devils?
Meph. O, by aspiring pride and insolence,
For which God threw him from the face of heaven.
Faust. And what are you that live with Lucifer?
Meph. Unhappy spirits that fell with Lucifer,
Conspired against our God with Lucifer,
And are forever damned with Lucifer.
Faust. Where are you damned?
Meph. In hell.
Faust. How comes it then that thou art out of hell?
Meph. Why this is hell, nor am I out of it.
Think'st thou that I who saw the face of God
And tasted the eternal joys of heaven
Am not tormented with ten thousand hells
In being deprived of everlasting bliss?
O Faustus, leave these frivolous demands
Which strikes a terror to my fainting soul!
[60–79]

But Faustus is not deterred by Mephistophilis' tormented soul, and instructs him to go to Lucifer and tell him that Faustus is ready to make his pact with him. Again Faustus is faced with the two angels dramatizing the spiritual conflict raging in his soul. But he is resolute.

When Mephistophilis returns he tells Faustus that Lucifer has agreed to accept Faustus' soul in exchange for twenty-four years of service by Mephistophilis. The pact must be written with Faustus' own blood. Faustus cuts his arm, and with the trickle of blood starts writing. But then his blood congeals. Faustus thinks it may be an omen of some sort. But Mephistophilis says quickly, "I'll fetch thee fire to dissolve it straight." He leaves and returns with a portable grate, which uncongeals the blood. The pact is finally signed, at the end of which Faustus proclaims, *Consummatus est!* the very words uttered by Jesus on the cross.

After signing the pact, Faustus asks, "Tell me, where is the place that men call hell?"

Meph. Under the heavens.
Faust. Ay, so are all things else, but whereabouts?
Meph. Within the bowels of these elements,
Where we are tortur'd and remain for ever:
Hell hath no limits, nor is circumscrib'd
In one self place; but where we are is hell,
And where hell is, there must we ever be:
And, to be short, when all the world dissolves,
And every creature shall be purified,
All places shall be hell that is not heaven.
Faust. I think hell's a fable.
Meph. Ay, think so, till experience change thy mind!
[2.1.113–125]

This is the kind of theological argument that Elizabethans loved, and to see it dramatized so cleverly on stage created rapt attention. The argument is not resolved, but then Faustus tells Mephistophilis that he cannot live without a wife. The latter obliges by bringing him an ugly she-devil. Faustus, in disgust, says, "Here's a hot whore indeed! No, I'll have no wife." To which Mephistophilis replies, "Marriage is but a ceremonial toy." He then promises to provide Faustus with "the fairest courtesans, And bring them ev'ry morning to thy bed."

But Faustus remains in constant inner turmoil as dramatized by the two angels. He finally tells Mephistophilis that he will not repent, saying, "Come, Mephistophilis, let us dispute again, And reason of divine astrology." And after discussing the planets and the zodiac, Faustus asks: "Now tell me, who made the world?"

Meph. I will not.
Faust. Sweet Mephistophilis, tell me.
Meph. Move me not, Faustus.
Faust. Villain, have not I bound thee to tell me any thing?
Meph. Ay, that is not against our kingdom.
This is: thou are damn'd; think thou of hell.
Faust. Think, Faustus, upon God that made the world.
Meph. Remember this. [*Exit*]
Faust. Ay, go, accursed spirit, to ugly hell!
'Tis thou has damn'd distressed Faustus' soul.
Is't not too late?

[2.2.64–75]

The two angels enter again, with the Bad Angel telling Faustus that it is indeed too late, and that if he repents Lucifer will tear him to pieces. The Good Angel tells Faustus that it is never too late to repent. And so, Faustus cries out, " O, Christ, my Saviour, my Saviour, Help to save distressed Faustus' soul!"

At this point Lucifer, Belzebub, and Mephistophilis visit Faustus and remind him of the pact he signed with his own blood. Like three Mafia enforcers they remind him of the consequences of his reneging on his vow. And to make him feel good about it all, they decide to amuse him with a show of the Seven Deadly Sins. This was great theater.

In Act 3, we find Faustus soaring across the heavens in a chariot drawn by dragons. He travels to Mount Olympus in Greece, over Europe, and then to Rome. There, in an invisible state, they park themselves in the Pope's privy-chamber where Faustus will perform his magic antics to upset the Pope and his Cardinals, all of which will greatly amuse an anti-Papal audience in London.

It is toward the end of the play that we find Marlowe's most memorable lines. It is in Act 5, Scene 1, in which Faustus asks Mephistophilis to bring forth Helen of Troy "whose sweet embraces may extinguish clean those thoughts that do dissuade me from my vow, and keep my oath I made to Lucifer."

Meph. This, or what else, my Faustus shall desire,
Shall be perform'd in twinkling of an eye.

[5.1.90–91]

Helen enters and passes over the stage between two Cupids.

Faust. Was this the face that launch'd a thousand ships,
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?—
Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.—

She kisses him.

Faust. Her lips suck forth my soul: see where it flies!—
Come, Helen, come, give me my soul again.
Here will I dwell, for heaven is in these lips.
[5.1. 92–97]

This scene no doubt had the audience holding its breath. The rest of the play brings us to Faustus' inevitable doom. His scholars try to save him, but it is too late. The two angels enter to deliver their last messages.

Good Ang. O thou has lost celestial happiness,
Pleasures unspeakable, bliss without end.
Hell, or the devil, had had no power on thee.
Hadst thou kept on that way, Faustus, behold,
In what resplendent glory thou hadst sit
In yonder throne, like those bright shining saints,
And triumph'd over hell; that hast thou lost:
And now, poor soul, must thy good angel leave thee,
The jaws of hell are open to receive thee.
Bad Ang. Now, Faustus, let thine eyes with horror stare
Into that vast perpetual torture-house.
There are the Furies tossing damned souls
On burning forks; their bodies boil in lead;
There are live quarters broiling on the coals,
That ne'er can die: this ever-burning chair
Is for o'er-tortured souls to rest them in;
These that are fed with sops of flaming fire,
Were gluttons and lov'd only delicates,
And laugh'd to see the poor starve at their gates:
But yet all these are nothing; thou shalt see
Ten thousand tortures that more horrid be.
[5.2. 108–129]

When the angels leave, the clock strikes eleven. Faustus has one hour to live, and Marlowe, as dramatist, makes the most of it. The audience waits with bated breath to see what happens in that last hour. And at the stroke of midnight, Lucifer, Belzebub, and Mephistophilis tear Faustus to pieces.

The Chorus ends the play with these words of admonition:

Faustus is gone: regard his hellish fall,
Whose fiendful fortune may exhort the wise,
Only to wonder at unlawful things,
Whose deepness doth entice such forward wits
To practice more than heavenly power permits.
[5.3. 23–27]

Pure Protestant Christian theology. It's hard to believe that Marlowe wrote this play when he was only 25. And it is easy to see why this play has endured as one of the great dramas of the Elizabethan era.

18

Henslowe's Diary

Philip Henslowe, the best known theatrical entrepreneur of the Elizabethan era, began his theater career in 1584 when he bought land in Southwark on which stood the Little Rose playhouse, which he afterwards rebuilt as the Rose Theatre. Edward Alleyn, the great actor, teamed up with Henslowe as partner, married the latter's step-daughter, and became the leading actor of Henslowe's productions.

As an actor, Alleyn was always on the lookout for plays in which he could perform the leading role. The fact that he became the quintessential hero in Marlowe's plays strongly suggests that he knew Marlowe well and may have helped him write the kind of effective lines and soliloquys that would enable Alleyn to "shake the scene."

From 1591 to 1609 Henslowe kept a diary that has become an important primary source about the Elizabethan theatre. It was first discovered by the great Shakespeare scholar, Edmond Malone (1741–1812), in the library at Dulwich College, which had been founded and endowed by Edward Alleyn. Apparently, Alleyn had gathered all of the books and documents related to his theatrical career, after the death of Henslowe in 1616, and deposited them in the college's library.

Malone was working on his own eleven-volume edition of Shakespeare's plays, and he studied the Diary carefully in order to determine the chronology in which the plays were written. But he found no mention of Shakespeare in the Diary. In fact, he disputed the genuineness of the three parts of Henry VI. The Diary, edited by J. Payne Collier, was published in 1845 by the Shakespeare Society. The Introduction states:

> The manuscript from which the present volume has been printed contains minute and valuable information respecting the history and condition of our early drama and stage, from the year 1591 to the year 1609, during the whole of which period Shakespeare was exercising his unequalled powers for the public instruction and amusement. Although his name nowhere occurs in the text of the following pages, the company of players to which he belonged was acting, if not in concert, in the joint occupation of the same theatre for two whole years, viz., from the beginning

> of June, 1594, to the middle of July, 1596; and it will be seen that in the list of plays performed not a few names occur, either identical with, or very similar to, the titles borne by some of Shakespeare's undoubted productions.

The diary was a depository of memoranda regarding all payments to, or transactions with, dramatists, players, and others, for a period of almost twenty years. Henslowe also recorded the names of plays, the dates of their performances, and their box-office receipts. However, memoranda of this kind between 1584 and 1591 have not been found. It is assumed that Henslowe kept records before 1591, but they have not come down to us. This is unfortunate, since we know that when Marlowe left Cambridge in 1587, with *Tamburlaine* under his arm, it was performed by the Lord Admiral's players, with Edward Alleyn in the leading role. The play was so successful that Marlowe hurriedly wrote its sequel, *Tamburlaine II*, which was performed in the autumn of 1587. A truly remarkable achievement for any writer.

In those days, plays and all their rights were bought by the theater owners, who engaged various theater troupes to perform them. The writers were paid a single amount no matter how popular the play became, or how many performances were staged. Many writers were paid a sum in advance on the basis of an outline or an idea. They were then paid the remainder when the play was finished.

Robert Greene was one of those writers who wrote for Henslowe and became quite bitter over his dependence on theater owners for his sustenance. Living in poverty, he blamed people like Henslowe and Alleyn for his plight, considering them as bloodsuckers who exploited writers who had no choice but to accept the terms offered by Henslowe.

We do not know if Marlowe shared Greene's views of theater owners. He had a source of income from the secret service, and he had the patronage of Thomas Walsingham. Also, Marlowe had a ready buyer of his plays, for Alleyn was in constant need of new astounding and heroic roles to perform. In fact, Henslowe's Diary provides a running chronicle of the performances of *The Jew of Malta, Doctor Faustus, Tamburlaine I & II, The Massacre at Paris*, and other plays later attributed to Shakespeare in the First Folio where they were published for the first time in 1623. Among those plays are the *Henry VI* trilogy and *Titus Andronicus*.

Of course, both Malone and the Shakespeare Society were disappointed that the Bard's name appeared nowhere in the Diary. The Introduction states:

> [R]ecollecting that the names of nearly all the other play-poets of the time occur, we cannot but wonder that that of Shakespeare is not met with in any part of the manuscript. The notices of Ben Jonson, Dekker, Chettle, Marston, Wilson, Drayton, Monday, Heywood, Middleton, Porter, Hathway, Rankins, Webster, Day, Rowley, Haughton, &c., are frequent, because they were all writers for Henslowe's theatre.

And that is precisely why Shakespeare's name is not to be found among the writers: he was not one of them. He may have been an actor and part owner of a

theatre, but he was clearly not a writer. What we do find in the Diary is evidence of the many performances staged of Marlowe's plays, before and after he departed the scene, a great tribute to their popularity.

From 1591 to 1597 Henslowe's records show that *The Jew of Malta* was performed 36 times; *Doctor Faustus* 20 times; *Henry VI* 16 times; *Harey the V* 12 times; *Massacre at Paris* 10 times; and, in revival, *Tamburlaine* 13 times; *Tamburlaine II* 7 times. The plays were performed by Lord Strange's Men, the Lord Admiral's Men, Lord Pembroke's players and the Earl of Sussex's Men. It should be noted that Marlowe's plays had to compete with many other plays by Kyd, Greene, Chettle, Jonson, and others, few of which have come down to us. Also, the theater was closed for many months during the plague.

But what is also of great interest in the Diary are the payments made to writers in the form of advances, or I.O.U.s. What follows is a selection of such entries, in their original spellings, that provide an insight into how writers, theater owners, and actors made financial arrangements in those days:

> I received forty shillinges of Mr Phillip Hinslowe, in part of five pounds for the playe of Willm Longsword, to be delivered presently, within 2 or three days, the 20th of January 1598. Mic. Drayton [p. 95].

> Paid unto Thomas Dickers, the 20 of Desembr 1597, for adycyons [additions] to Fostus twentie shellinges, and fyve shellinges for a prolog to Marloes Tamberlen, so in all I saye payde twentye fyve shellinges [p. 71].

> Received in pt of paiment of Damon and Pythias, this 16 of February 1599. By me, Henry Chettle [20 shillings] [p. 93].

> Lent the 14 May 1597, to Jubie, uppon a notte from Nashe, twentie shellinges more, for the Jylle [Isle] of dogges [Dogs], wch [which] he is wrytinge [writing] for the company [p. 94].

> Lent unto Bengemen Johnsone [Ben Jonson], the 3 of desembr 1597, upon a Booke wch [which] he was to writte for us befor crysmas [Christmas] next after the date hereof, wch he showed the plotte unto the company: I saye lente in Redy money unto hime the some of (20 shillings) [p. 106].

> Layd owte for coper lace for the littell boye, for a valle [veil] for the boye, ageanste the playe of Dido and Eneus, the 3 of jenewary 1597. [This was probably a revival of Marlowe's *Dido: Queen of Carthage.*]

> Lent unto Robarte Shawe, the 18 of febreary 1598, to paye unto Harton for a comodey called a Womon will have her will, the some of (20 shillings) [p. 119].

> Lent unto Thomas Dowton, and Robart Shaw, and Edwarde Jeweby, the 1 of marche 1598, to bye a boocke of Mr Dickers, called the treplesetie of cockowlles [The Triplicity of Cuckolds], the some of fyve powndes. I say lent [p. 119].

> Lent unto Thomas Downton, the 22 of Janewary 1598, to leand unto Mr Chapman, in earneste of a boocke called the world rones a whelles [The World Runs on Wheels], the some of (2 pounds) [p. 143].

> Receaved by me Robt. Shaa, of phillip Henslowe, to paye H. Chettle, in full paiment of a booke called the stepmothers tragedy, for the use of the company, 30 pounds I say Receaved [p. 157].

Lent unto Thomas Downton, the 3 septmbr 1599, to lend unto Thomas Deckers, Bengemen Johnson [Ben Jonson], hary Chettle, and other Jentellman, in earneste of a playe called Robart, the second, Kinge of Scottes tragedie, the sum of 40 shillings [p. 156].

This 16 of october 99 Receved by me, Thomas Downton, of phillip Henslow, to pay Mr Monday, Mr Drayton, and Mr Wilson and Hathway, for the first pte of the lyfe of Sir Jhon Ouldcasstell [John Oldcastle], and in earnest of the second pte for the use of the compayny, ten pownd, I say receved [p. 158].

Lent unto Robert Shawe and Mr Jube, the 19 of Maye 1601, to bye divers thinges for the Jewe of malta, the some of (five pounds) [p. 187].

Lent unto Mr Alleyn, the 25 September 1601, to lend unto Bengemen Johnson, upon his writtinge of his adicions [additions] in Geronymo the some of 40 shillings [Apparently, Alleyn borrowed money to lend Ben Jonson so that the latter could add lines for Alleyn.] [p. 201].

Lent unto Thomas Downton, the 29 of maye 1602, to paye Thomas Dickers, Drayton, Mydellton, and Webester, and Mondaye, in fulle paymente for ther playe called too harpes [Two Harpies] [A good example of five writers collaborating on one play.] [p. 222].

Lent unto the companye, the 22 of novmbr 1602, to paye unto Wm Birde and Samwell Rowley, for ther adicyones [additions] in Doctor Fostes [p. 228].

Lent unto Thomas Hewode, the 21 of octobr 1602, to paye unto Mr Dickers, chettell, Smythe, Webester and Hewode, in fulle payment of ther playe of ladye Jane, the some of (5 pounds, 10 shillings) [p. 242].

The above represents a small fraction of the transactions in the Diary. In all, Henslowe paid advances to: Henry Chettle, Robert Greene, Ben Jonson, George Chapman, Michael Drayton, William Haughton, Anthony Monday, Samuel Rowley, Thomas Heywood, Richard Hathway, Thomas Dekker, John Webster, Thomas Middleton, John Day, Henry Porter, John Singer, Martin Slater, Robert Wilson, Willliam Rankins, and Thomas Nashe. And certainly he paid Marlowe for his plays, but these transactions took place before this Diary recorded them. And where was the prolific William Shakespeare in all of this activity? Nowhere to be found.

It should be noted, as already mentioned, that Henslowe's Diary was published by the Shakespeare Society and edited by J. Payne Collier. Although Collier was a competent scholar and made significent contributions to Shakespeare scholarship, it turns out that he was also a fraud, an expert forger. He started out as a reporter for The Times where he was reprimanded for misreporting a speech in the House of Commons. That led to his transfer to the Morning Chronicle.

In 1806, Collier bought a copy of the Shakespeare Third Folio, after which he embarked on a career as literary scholar. In 1835, Thomas Rodd published Collier's *New Facts Regarding the Life of Shakespeare*, which, according to S. Schoenbaum, "exhibits Collier's principal contributions to biographical misrepresentation." Collier was prone to "contaminate the flow of factual narrative with his own fabrications."

In 1840, three eminent scholars—Rev. Alexander Dyce, Charles Knight, and J. O. Halliwell—founded the Shakespeare Society. Collier became its director and worked on twenty-one of its publications. He gained access to the Henslowe-Alleyn papers at Dulwich College. One of his fabrications in *The Memoirs of Edward Alleyn* (1841) is a list of King's players in which Shakespeare's name appears second among the actors of the company. This "fact" was concocted to prove some other "facts" about Shakespeare's wealth.

It was Collier who also put significant credence behind the notion that *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit* was an attack on Shakespeare. No one in the decades following the publication of Greene's pamphlet believed that it had anything to do about Shakespeare. It wasn't until 1766, when a scholar by the name of Thomas Tyrwhitt found the pamphlet and assumed that "Shake-scene" referred to Shakespeare. That point of view, which Collier promoted, has been accepted by all future Shakespeare scholars as revealed truth. From that pamphlet, written in 1592, before Shakespeare's name had appeared on anything, Collier was able to deduce that Shakespeare was already "a writer of original plays, an adapter and improver of those already in existence, (some of them by Greene, Marlowe, Lodge, or Peele) and no doubt he contributed prologues or epilogues, and inserted scenes, speeches, or passages on any temporary emergency. Having his ready assistance, the Lord Chamberlain's servants required few other contributions from rival dramatists." (p. 138, Schoenbaum: from Collier's *The Life of William Shakespeare,* Vol. I, p. cxxxii.)

However, the actual chronology of events proves that Collier's deductions were false.

19

Marlowe and Edward Alleyn

Edward Alleyn was acknowleged by his contemporaries as the finest actor on the Elizabethan stage, comparable to "Proteus for shapes, and Roscius for a tongue." Indeed, Marlowe was fortunate in having such a superb thespian bring to vibrant life his marvellously conceived characters: Tamburlaine, Doctor Faustus, and Barbaras the Jew of Malta. It is without question that Alleyn's performances made these plays and their characters as popular as they became.

One must assume that Alleyn knew Marlowe, and probably both men discussed how the plays should be staged and their characters interpreted. Alleyn may have even suggested adding or changing lines to enhance the projection of the characters by him.

According to the *Memoirs of Edward Alleyn*, by J. Payne Collier (1841), derived from Alleyn's family papers preserved in Dulwich College, the great actor was born in St. Botolph's parish in September of 1566, making him two years younger than Marlowe. His father, a man of some property, died when Alleyn was four. His mother subsequently married a person named Browne, an actor as well as a haberdasher. It was Browne who brought Alleyn and his elder brother John to the stage. And it was during this time, in the 1570's, that the theater business began to grow. Collier writes (p. 5):

> The first public theatre upon record was opened [about 1571]; and the Curtain was in use before 1576.... The Blackfriars theatre was also constructed in 1576; and the Whitefriars theatre was in the possession of a theatrical company soon afterwards. The Rose, Hope, and Swan theatres, on the Bankside, were opened either shortly before or after 1580; so by the time Alleyn was sixteen years old dramatic representations were extremely frequent and popular in all quarters of the metropolis.... In 1585 Queen Elizabeth took into her services twelve players selected from the most distinguished associations of the day.

Thus, there were plenty of employment opportunities for actors. Few of the nobility were without companies of players, performing under the protection of their names. In fact, companies of actors were required to have the sponsorship of a nobleman in order to guarantee their morality. Young boys were

attached to theatrical companies because of the need for them to play female roles, and as a young boy Alleyn undoubtedly got his start by performing female parts.

By 1592, Alleyn, at the age of 26, had achieved a very high reputation as an actor. He is mentioned twice in *Pierce Penilesse* by Thomas Nashe, published in 1592, as a performer of the most deserved distinction. It was also in that book that Nashe accused Robert Greene of having written a "scald trivial lying pamphlet," *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit.* That famous pamphlet is used erroneously by Shakespeare scholars to establish Shakespeare as a playwright as early as 1592 because of Greene's reference to a "Shake-scene." But it is obvious that Greene's Shake-scene was Edward Alleyn, for it was Alleyn who acted in Greene's most popular play, *Orlando Furioso*, for which Greene was probably paid a pittance. Collier writes (p. 7):

> One of the parts which Alleyn "surmounted in" we may now assert for the first time, was Orlando, in Robert Greene's play of *Orlando Furioso.* Among the MSS. at Dulwich College is a large portion of the original part of Orlando, as transcribed by the copyist of the theatre for the actor. It is in three pieces, one much larger than the others, all imperfect, being more or less injured by worms and time. Here and there certain blanks have been supplied in a different hand-writing, and that hand-writing is Alleyn's. We may conclude, therefore, that this is the very copy from which he learnt his part.... We have no hesitation in pronouncing this one of the most singular theatrical relics in existence.

We wonder what else lies buried in the archives at Dulwich College. Collier, writing for the Shakespeare Society, was anxious to find something relating to Shakespeare as a writer. But there was nothing except a reference to "Willes newe play" in a poem on wagers laid on Alleyn, involved in an acting competition among fellow players. Collier was unable to date the poem, but it must have been written after 1596 since it mentions the Globe Theatre, which wasn't completed until 1596. In modern spelling, it reads (p. 13):

> Sweet Ned, now win another wager
> For thine old friend and Fellow stager.
> Tarlton himself thou dost excell,
> And Bentley beat, and conquer Knell,
> And now shall Kempe overcome as well.
> The money is down, the place the Hope,
> Phillippes shall hide his head and Pope.
> Fear not, the victory is thine;
> Thou still as matchless Ned shall shine.
> If Rossius Richard [Burbage] foams and fumes,
> The globe shall have but empty rooms,
> If thou dost act; and Willes new play
> Shall be rehearsed some other day.
> Consent then, Ned; do us this grace:
> Thou cannot fail in any case;
> For in the trial, come what may,
> All sides shall brave Ned Alleyn say.

We do not know the title of the new play, nor the last name of Wille. But the association with Richard Burbage and the Globe Theatre would tend to affirm that Wille was indeed William Shakespeare. As we have noted, Shakespeare's name first appeared on a published work, *Venus and Adonis*, in 1593, several months after Marlowe's supposed death. Note that it first appeared on a poem, not a play. Henrietta C. Bartlett writes in *Mr. William Shakespeare* (1922) (p. 3):

> This is the first work by Shakespeare to appear in print and was dedicated to his friend and patron, Henry Wriothesley, Lord Southampton. The story is founded on Ovid's *Metamorphosis* but Shakespeare may have known it only through Golding's translation of 1567. He was undoubtedly influenced by Lodge's *Scillaes Metamorphosis*, 1589, and the poem has a close resemblance to Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*, which was written before 1593, though not printed until 1598.

The only other Wille that comes to mind is William Rowley. Of him, Swinburne wrote: "Of all the poets and humorists who lit up the London stage for half a century of unequalled glory, William Rowley was the most thoroughly loyal Londoner: the most evidently and proudly mindful that he was a citizen of no mean city" (p. 187). But Rowley was born in 1585, making him too young if the above poem was written in the late 1590s.

Collier is also very much concerned with the authorship of some of the plays listed in Henslowe's Diary. He writes (p. 21):

> The probability certainly is, that Alleyn never performed in any of Shakespeare's plays; but in our present state of information, it is impossible to speak at all decisively upon the point. The "Leir," the "Romeo," the "Henry VIII," the "Moore in Venis," and the "Pericles," of the preceding inventory, may have been the Lear, Romeo, Henry VIII, Othello, and Pericles of Shakespeare.

But what makes it unlikely that these plays were written by Shakespeare is the fact that the Globe was still under construction while these plays were being staged by the Lord Admiral's players and the Lord Chamberlain's players between 1594 and 1596. Henslowe lists the performances as follows in his usual creative spelling (p. 22):

9 June 1594 Rd at Hamlet
11 June 1594 Rd at the Tamynge of a Shrowe
12 June 1594 Rd at Andronicus
25 Augt 1594 Rd at the Venesyon Comodey
17 Sept 1594 Rd at Palamon and Arsett
8 Nov. 1594 Rd at Seser and Pompie
20 June 1595 Rd at Antony and Vallea
26 June 1595 Rd at the 2 pte of Seaser
28 Nov. 1595 Rd at Harry the V.
22 June 1596 Rd at Troye

Collier comments (p. 23):

> If none of these plays were by Shakespeare, but dramas of which he availed himself in the composition of his own plays, the above list shews that he had perhaps been

> in some way concerned in the representation of them, and his attention might thus have been especially directed to them.

While Collier is of the belief that Alleyn never acted in a Shakespeare play, he provides ample evidence of the actor's great success in Marlowe's plays. He writes (p. 8):

> Another of Alleyn's famous characters was Barabas, in Christopher Marlowe's tragedy, *The Rich Jew of Malta;* and to this fact we have the evidence of his contemporary, Thomas Heywood, the dramatist, who had been an actor in Alleyn's company in 1596, and doubtless recollected the effect produced by him in the part. Possibly, Heywood did not recollect the first production of the tragedy, about 1589 or 1590; but it continued a favourite with the town for many years, most likely until Alleyn finally quitted the stage. It was not printed until 1633, when it was revived at the Cockpit Theatre in Drury Lane, and its success there recommended it for representation at Court.

Marlowe's Doctor Faustus was another great favorite, and legend has it that Alleyn was so effective in portraying the man who had sold his soul to the devil, that on one occasion the old Rose Theatre "cracked and frighted the audience," while seeing a devil on the stage.

An interesting question is why didn't Alleyn ever act in a Shakespeare play? If the plays had actually been written by Marlowe after he had been reported dead, some arrangement would have been made with the actor and part-theater owner Shakespeare to get the plays produced. We don't know exactly when the first "Shakespeare" play was staged at the Globe with Burbage in the leading role, but we do know that the building of the Globe was completed by the summer of 1596, a good three years after Marlowe had exited the scene.

And why didn't the purveyor of the new Marlowe plays bring them to Alleyn for staging and not to Shakespeare? Probably because Alleyn, so well acquainted with Marlowe's style, would have recognized them as Marlowe's work and thus become aware that Marlowe was still alive. And that is why Alleyn became famous for his portrayals of Marlowe's characters, while Burbage became famous for his portrayals of Shakespeare's great heroes.

On October 22, 1592, Edward Alleyn married Joan Woodward, the daughter of Philip Henslowe's second wife, Agnes Woodward. It was a very happy marriage. Very soon after the wedding, the plague broke out in London, and the theater was closed. Alleyn and Lord Strange's Men went out into the country to put on plays. According to the dates on Alleyn's letters to his wife, whom he called Mouse, he was in Chelmsford on May 2, 1593, then Bristol on August 1, 1593. Although Marlowe had been supposedly killed on May 30, 1593, there is no mention of that event in any of the letters from Alleyn to his wife or in Henslowe's letters to his son-in-law. Henslowe's letters were a bleak narrative of the horrors of the plague and the many deaths of people all around them. However, by September, the plague had subsided.

Queen Elizabeth died in 1603, and James VI of Scotland, son of Mary Queen of Scots, became James I of England. On his accession, James took into his pay

the Lord Chamberlain's servants, and they were afterwards called the King's Players. This was the company to which Shakespeare was attached. Queen Anne adopted Lord Worcester's players, of which Thomas Heywood was one, as her theatrical servants. And Prince Henry took as players Alleyn and thirteen of his associates, who had previously belonged to the Earl of Nottingham.

In April 1604, the list of the King's Players included: Burbage, Shakespeare, Fletcher, Phillips, Condle, Hemminges, Armyn, Slye, Cowley, Hostler, and Day. Collier had altered the list and placed Shakespeare's name second in order to enhance his status.

It should be noted that both Henslowe and Alleyn were also involved in the lucrative animal fighting business. Henslowe owned the Bear Garden where these shows were put on. In March 1603–4, King James sent for Alleyn and requested that he bring his dogs from the Bear Garden to bait a lion in his den. Alleyn complied with the King's request, and it was quite a spectacle as the three dogs went after the lion and the lion wiped the floor with them. An account of the exhibition, published in Stowe's Chronicle, states:

> The 2 first dogs dyed within a few dayes, but the last dog was well recovered of all his hurts, and the young Prince commanded his servant E. Allen to bring the dog to him to S. James, where the Prince charged the said Allen to keepe him, and make much of him, saying, he that had fought with the King of Beasts, should never after fight with any inferior creature.

20

Barabas: The Jew of Malta

Of all of Marlowe's plays, *The Jew of Malta* was the most popular. It was performed at Henslowe's theater thirty-six times from 1591 to 1597. Edward Alleyn's performances as Barabas, the Machiavellian villain, was considered one of his best roles and certainly contributed to the success of the play, in which costume and make up no doubt enhanced the production. For all intents and purposes, the play is a horror story in which Barabas and his villainous side-kick-slave Ithamore perform one horrible deed after another. Apparently, Elizabethan audiences loved horror stories, and Marlowe had a talent for giving them what they wanted.

Marlowe scholar Leo Kirschbaum tells us that the sources of the play "are popular folklore plus the pseudo-Machiavelli of Gentillet and others." He considers *The Jew of Malta* to be Marlowe's "most theatrically mature play.... There is progressive novelty in the various scenes. We are constantly being entertained with variety of action and emotion.... To trace the working out of the plot of *The Jew of Malta* is to become shocked at the critics' inability to appreciate the progress which Marlowe was able to achieve in the drama in the short time of five years."

Machiavelli, expressing the spirit of sixteenth-century Italy, reacted against the asceticism and scholasticism of the Middle Ages. He believed that truth is only what is experientially effective. Thus, he shunned imagination, which was merely an escape from reality. "The world is what we make it ourselves, and each ... person is his own Providence and his own fortune" (I, 465–6). "Every man on this earth has his mission, suited to his abilities" (II, 547). If Marlowe had read this while still at Cambridge, it may have driven him to give up a secure life in divinity for an uncertain life in poetry.

Marlowe was a keen student of politics, but as a student of divinity he was well versed in Calvin's dictum concerning man's innate depravity. What he found in Machiavelli was corroboration of that view of mankind. He had read *The Prince* (1513) and *The Discourses* (1512–22), and it was in the latter (Book III, Chapter IV) that he found an excellent description of the lust for power:

> This desire to reign is so powerful that it not only dominates the minds of those born with the expectation of a throne, but also that of those who have no such expectations. This was well illustrated by the wife of Tarquin the younger, daughter of Servius, who, urged on by this mad desire, regardless of all filial piety, stirred up her husband to deprive her father of his life and kingdom; so much more did she value being a queen than being the daughter of a king.

Thus, the Machiavel in Marlowe's prologue is atheistic, murderous, sadistic, usurious, revengeful, and hypocritical. He is not The Prince. He is a demonic version which the French Huguenot, Gentillet, exposed in his book published in 1576. This Machiavel sets the stage for what the audience will hear and see as the play unfolds. He announces:

> Although the world thinks Machiavel is dead —
> Yet was his soul but flown beyond the Alps —
> And, now the Guise is dead, is come from France
> To view this land and frolic with his friends! ...
> Admir'd I am by those that hate me most....
> I count religion but a childish toy,
> And hold there is no sin but ignorance....
> Might first made kings, and laws were then most sure
> When like the [Draco's] they were writ in blood.
> ...
> But whither am I bound? I come not, I,
> To read a lecture here in Britain,
> But to present the tragedy of a Jew,
> Who smiles to see how full his bags are cramm'd —
> Which money was not got without my means. ...
> I crave but this: Grace him as he deserves!
> And let him not be entertain'd the worse
> Because he favors me.

Marlowe is a master at establishing the theme of his play in the opening scene, which, in the Jew of Malta is summed up in the Biblical adage that "The love of money is the root of all evil," which is immediately followed by "which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Timothy 6–10). Thus the play opens with Barnabas in his counting house with heaps of gold before him. He speaks of his commercial enterprises, comparing his various customers. Barabas has become the richest merchant in Malta, and it is his understanding of wealth that is the key to his success. He speaks:

> So that of thus much that return was made;
> And of the third part of the Persian ships
> There was the venture summ'd and satisfied.
> As for those Samnites, and the men of Uz,
> That bought my Spanish oils and wines of Greece,
> Here have I purs'd their paltry silverlings.
> Fie, what a trouble 'tis to count this trash!

Well fare the Arabians, who so richly pay
The things they traffic for with wedge of gold,
Whereof a man may easily in a day
Tell that which may maintain him all his life.
...
Give me the merchants of the Indian mines,
That trade in metal of the purest mould;
The wealthy Moor, that in the eastern rocks
Without control can pick his riches up,
And in his house heap pearl like pebble stones,
Receive them free, and sell them by the weight!
Bags of fiery opals, sapphires, amethysts,
Jacinths, hard topaz, grass-green emeralds,
Beauteous rubies, sparkling diamonds,
And seld-seen costly stones of so great price,
As one of them, indifferently rated,
And of a carat of this quantity,
May serve, in peril of calamity,
To ransom great kings in captivity.
This is the ware wherein consists my wealth;
And thus methinks should men of judgment frame
Their means of traffic from the vulgar trade,
And, as their wealth increaseth, so inclose
Infinite riches in a little room.
[I.1. 1–11, 19–37]

Thus, in that opening scene we get a dazzling insight into Barabas's economic philosophy. He is rich because he understands the foundation of wealth. As the scene continues, Barabas expresses concern for his ships laden with merchandise which are due to arrive at Malta. Merchants inform Barabas of the safe arrival of his ships. The reason for the lateness of his argosy from Alexandria is because of a Spanish fleet that was giving chase to the galleys of the Turk. Barabas instructs the merchants to get clearance from the custom house to unload the ships. Alone, Barabas muses:

Thus trowls our fortune in by land and sea,
And thus are we on every side enrich'd.
These are the blessings promis'd to the Jews,
And herein was old Abram's happiness:
What more may heaven do for earthly man
Than thus to pour out plenty in their laps,
Ripping the bowels of the earth for them,
Making the sea their servant, and the winds
To drive their substance with successful blasts?
Who hateth me but for my happiness?
Or who is honour'd now but for his wealth?
Rather I had, a Jew, be hated thus,
Than pitied in a Christian poverty;
...

They say we are a scattered nation:
I cannot tell; but we have scambled up
More wealth by far than those that brag of faith.
There is Kirriah Jairim, the great Jew of Greece,
Obed in Bairseth, Nones in Portugal,
Myself in Malta, some in Italy,
Many in France, and wealthy every one;
Ay, wealthier far than any Christian.
I must confess we come not to be kings:
That's not our fault: alas, our number's few,
And crowns come either by succession,
Or urg'd by force; and nothing violent,
Oft have I heard tell, can be permanent.
Give us a peaceful rule; make Christian kings,
That thirst so much for principality.
[104–116, 122–136]

Thus, Marlowe sums up the political status of Jews in Europe in the sixteenth century. It is a rather sympathetic picture of a persecuted people achieving material success despite their social handicaps. At that time no Jews were permitted to settle in England, but a wealthy Jewish merchant in Malta could be used as a marvelous Machiavellian character in a tragic play. But why Malta? Because that Christian island was in middle of the Mediterranean Sea where an ongoing war was waging between the Spanish and the Turks. After the Catholics had conquered Granada in 1492, the Moslems were expelled. They revenged, with the help of the Turks, by piratical attacks on the coast of Spain.

But Christian Malta, close to Sicily, was able to avoid being despoiled by the Turks by agreeing to pay them tribute.

After his monologue, several Jews enter to bring Barabas some troubling news. A fleet of warlike galleys has come from Turkey, and their leader is conferring with the governor. But Barabas is unconcerned for, "The Turks and those of Malta are in league." But his concern is heightened when he is told that the governor has ordered all the Jews of Malta to come to the Senate House.

Scene Two takes place in the Senate House where Ferneze, Governor of Malta, and Calymath, son of the Pasha of Turkey, are conferring. Why this visit, Ferneze asks, what do you want? And Calymath replies: "The ten years' tribute that remains unpaid." But we can't pay it now, pleads the governor. Can you give us a month to raise the money, he asks. Calymath agrees:

We grant a month, but see you keep your promise.
Now launch our galleys back again to sea,
Where we'll attend the respite you have ta'en,
And for the money send our messenger.
[1.2.29–32]

Once the Turks are gone, the governor turns to the Jews who have come to the Senate House. He levies a tax, requiring them to pay one half of their estates so that Malta can pay off the Turks. Anyone who refuses to pay shall become a

Christian. And he who refuses conversion shall pay all he has. And because Barabas objects to all of this, the Governor declares that the state will seize all of his wealth. But Barabas makes this a religious issue:

Barabas: Will you, then, steal my goods?
Is theft the ground of your religion?
Ferneze: No, Jew; we take particularly thine,
To save the ruin of a multitude.
And better one want for a common good,
Than many perish for a private man.
Yet, Barabas, we will not banish thee,
But here in Malta, where thou gott'st thy wealth,
Live still, and, if thou canst, get more.
Barabas: Christians, what or how can I multiply?
Of naught is nothing made.
First Knight: From naught at first thou cam'st to little wealth,
From little unto more, from more to most.
If your first curse fall heavy on thy head,
And make thee poor and scorn'd of all the world,
'Tis not our fault, but thy inherent sin.
Barabas: What, bring you Scripture to confirm your wrongs?
Preach me not out of my possessions.
Some Jews are wicked, as all Christians are;
But say the tribe I descended of
Were all in general cast away for sin,
Shall I be tried for their transgression?
The man that dealeth righteously shall live;
And which of you can charge me otherwise?
Ferneze: Out, wretched Barabas!
Sham'st thou not thus to justify thyself,
As if we knew not thy profession?
If thou rely upon thy righteousness,
Be patient, and thy riches will increase.
Excess of wealth is cause of covetousness;
And covetousness, O, 'tis a monstrous sin!
Barabas: Ay, but theft is worse ... if you rob me thus,
I must be forc'd to steal, and compass more.
[I.2. 98–131]

There is no doubt that Barabas is an exasperating debater, and his arguments simply annoy the Governor, who finally loses patience. He orders Barabas's mansion to be seized and turned into a nunnery.

How marvelously Marlowe is able to weave all of these elements to create an enthralling reality for his audience: the predicament of the persecuted Jew, the obsessive love of money, the ongoing war between Catholic Spain and the Ottoman Turks, the fate of Malta, commerce in the Mediterranean and its hazards, current events, economic philosophy, the moral dialogue between Christian and Jew, etc., all in one remarkable play. In the conflict between Christian and Moslem, Barabas becomes the consummate enemy of both, among whom

he must live. But whatever sympathy he may arouse in the early part of the play is soon lost as his monstrous deeds multiply.

Marlowe's knowledge of sixteenth-century geopolitics, the Bible, human nature, and the historical context of the events in the play is quite amazing. He knew his history and his world. It should be noted that the Turks and their Barbary allies on the North African coast continued to demand tribute from Christian nations for safe passage in the Mediterranean as late as 1820. Indeed, America's first war after establishing its national government was in 1801 against the Barbary pirates who were extorting tribute from the United States government.

Following the frustrating argument with the Governor, Barabas's fellow Jews try to console him over his terrible loss. They compare his lot with Job's. But Barabas complains that he has lost more than Job. He dismisses his fellow Jews as a bunch of losers, and after they leave him, stewing in his bitterness, he says:

> See the simplicity of these base slaves,
> Who, for the villains have no wit themselves,
> Think me to be a senseless lump of clay,
> That will with every water wash to dirt!
> No, Barabas is born to better chance,
> And fram'd of finer mould than common men,
> That measure naught but by the present time.
> A reaching thought will search his deepest wits,
> And cast with cunning for the time to come;
> For evils are apt to happen every day.
> [219–228]

So we see Barabas as an egotist of the first order, "born to better chance." Suddenly, his beautiful daughter Abigail enters the scene. She tells her father how distraught she is over his losses and that she is willing to go to the Senate House "and rent their hearts with tearing of my hair, till they reduce the wrongs done to my father." Barabas tells her that that won't be necessary. Much of his wealth is hidden beneath the floor in the house, and he tells Abigail that she must pretend to become a nun so that she can get back into the house, find the gold and jewels and bring them out to him.

She is distraught at having to lie and dissemble, especially when it comes to religious faith. But Barabas tells her:

> As good dissemble that thou never mean'st
> As first mean truth and then dissemble it:
> A counterfeit profession is better
> Than unseen hypocrisy.
> [300–303]

Abigail then convinces the Abbess that she wants to become a nun and pass away her life in penitence. The Abbess accepts Abigail's plea and permits her to enter the mansion. But Barabas pretends that he is greatly upset over his daugh-

ter's conversion, which two friars, Jacomo and Bernardine, vie to take credit for. Meanwhile, Barabas protests loudly over this daughter's conversion while whispering to her in asides, giving her instructions for carrying out his plan. Just as they are all about to leave, Mathias, a young man with romance on his mind, enters. He observes the scene and says:

> Who's this? Fair Abigail, the rich Jew's daughter,
> Become a nun! Her father's sudden fall
> Has humbled her, and brought her down to this.
> Tut, she were fitter for a tale of love,
> Than to be tired out with orisons;
> And better would she far become a bed,
> Embraced in a friendly lover's arms,
> Than rise at midnight to a solemn mass.
> [378–385]

Immediately, Mathias's friend Lodovick, the Governor's son, enters the scene, and asks Mathias why he's "in a dump." Mathias explains. Lodovick responds: "And if she be so fair as you report, 'twere time well spent to go and visit her. How say you? Shall we?" Mathias responds positively, and the scene ends.

Does not the above scene remind one of Hamlet, Act 3, Scene 1, in which Hamlet speaks his famous soliloquy, at the end of which, as he hears Ophelia approaching, says: "Nymph, in thy orisons be all my sins remembered." Which is soon followed by "Get thee to a nunnery, why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners...." Orisons, of course, are prayers. The words spoken by Hamlet are echoes of words uttered by Mathias.

Act 2, Scene 1, opens with an exquisite bit of poetry spoken by Barabas as he awaits Abigail near the nunnery:

> Thus, like the sad presaging raven, that tolls
> The sick man's passport in her hollow beak,
> And in the shadow of the silent night
> Doth shake contagion from her sable wings;
> Vexed and tormented runs poor Barabas
> With fatal curses towards these Christians.
> [2.1. 1–6]

Abigail then appears with the bags of gold and jewels which she has retrieved from the house. Barabas is ecstatic:

> My gold, my fortune, my felicity,
> Strength to my soul, death to mine enemy!
> Welcome the first beginner of my bliss!
> ...
> O girl! O gold! O beauty! O my bliss!
> [51–53, 57]

Abigail then returns to the Nunnery. Barabas is now wealthy enough to buy another house. Scene Two, which probably occurs a few days later, takes place at

the Senate House where the Governor is conferring with Don Bosco, Vice-admiral to the King of Spain, who has brought his ship to Malta. He relates how he had been in a battle with Turkish galleys, all of which were sunk, except for one,

> The captain's slain; the rest remain our slaves,
> Of which we would make sale in Malta here.
> [2.2.17–18]

But because Malta is part of a tributary league with the Turks, the Governor cannot permit the sale to take place. But encouraged by the First Knight, Don Bosco tries to persuade the Governor to break his pact with the Turks. He says:

> Will Knights of Malta be in league with Turks,
> And buy it basely too for sums of gold?
> My lord, remember that, to Europe's shame,
> The Christian Isle of Rhodes, from whence you came,
> Was lately lost, and you were stated here
> To be at deadly enmity with Turks.
> ...
> What is the sum that Calymath requires?
> *Ferneze*: A hundred thousand crowns.
> *Don Bosco*: My lord and king hath title to this isle,
> And he means quickly to expel you hence.
> Therefore be rul'd by me, and keep the gold:
> I'll write unto his majesty for aid,
> And not depart until I see you free.
> *Ferneze*: On this condition shall thy Turks be sold.
> Bosco, thou shalt be Malta's general;
> We and our warlike knights will follow thee
> Against these barbarous misbelieving Turks.
> [28–46]

And so, Malta is now at war with the Turks. Scene Three opens in the market-place where the slaves are to be sold. Barabas enters:

> In spite of these swine-eating Christians,
> (Unchosen nation, never circumcis'd,
> Such as, poor villains, were n'er thought upon
> Till Titus and Vespasian conquer'd us,)
> Am I become as wealthy as I was.
> They hop'd my daughter would ha' been a nun;
> But she's at home, and I have bought a house
> As great and fair as is the governor's;
> And there, in spite of Malta, will I dwell,
> Having Ferneze's hand, whose heart I'll have,
> Ay, and his son's too, or it shall go hard.
> I am not of the tribe of Levi, I,
> That can so soon forget an injury.
> We Jews can fawn like spaniels when we please,
> And when we grin we bite; yet are our looks
> As innocent and harmless as a lamb's.

I learn'd in Florence how to kiss my hand,
Heave up my shoulders when they call me dog,
And duck as low as any bare-foot friar,
Hoping to see them starve upon a stall,
Or else be gather'd in our synagogue,
That, when the offering-basin comes to me,
Even for charity, I may spit into't.
[2.3.7–29]

At this point, Barabas would have lost the sympathy of any audience. Anyone who spits into an offering plate is a pretty vile person. Lodowick enters and seeks out Barabas. He wants access to Abigail, and so he asks Barabas if he has a diamond to sell. Barabas, leading him on, says yes. An interesting conversation ensues, until they reach the market-place. Lodowick tags along with Barabas who wants to buy a slave. Barabas's repartee with the slaves is amusing and fascinating. Every word Barabas utters reveals his true character. Marlowe was indeed a master at creating character and using the subtleties of conversation to paint vivid pictures. Finally, Barabas comes upon a slave he likes.

Barabas: Where wast thou born?
Ithamore: In Thrace, brought up in Arabia.
Barabas: So much the better; thou art for my turn.
An hundred crowns? I'll have him; there's the coin.
Gives money.
First Officer: Then mark him, sir, and take him hence.
Barabas (aside): Ay, mark him, you were best; for this is he
That by my help shall do much villainy.
(Aloud) My lord, farewell.—Come, sirrah; you are mine.
(To Lodowick) As for the diamond, it shall be yours.
I pray, sir, be no stranger at my house;
All that I have shall be at your command.
[2.3. 133–143]

Meanwhile, Mathias and his mother Katherine enter the scene. They too are seeking to buy a slave. Mathias sees Lodowick conferring with Barabas. He senses that it is about Abigail. After Lodowick leaves, Mathias approaches Barabas, while his mother is looking over the slaves, and asks what they were talking about. Barabas answers, "We talked of diamonds, not of Abigail." Mother then approaches: "Tell me, Mathias, is not that the Jew?"

Mathias: Yes, madam, and my talk with him was
About borrowing a book or two.
Katherine: Converse not with him; he is cast off from heaven.–
Thou hast thy crowns, fellow.—Come, let's away.
Mathias: Sirrah Jew, remember the book.
[161–166]

Barabas now turns to his newly purchased slave, to see what he has bought. Barabas asks his name, birth, condition, and profession. The slave replies that his name is Ithamore and that his profession is "what you please."

Barabas: Hast thou no trade? Then listen to my words,
And I will teach thee that shall stick by thee.
First, be thou void of these affections:
Compassion, love, vain hope, and heartless fear;
Be mov'd at nothing, see thou pity none,
But to thyself smile when the Christians moan.
Ithamore: O, brave master! I worship your nose for this.
Barabas: As for myself, I walk abroad a-nights,
And kill sick people groaning under walls.
Sometimes I go about and poison wells; ...
Being young, I studied physic, and began
To practice first upon the Italian;
There I enrich'd the priests with burials,
And always kept the sextons' arms in ure
With digging graves and ringing dead men's knells.
And, after that, was I an engineer,
And in the wars 'twixt France and Germany,
Under the pretence of helping Charles the Fifth,
Slew friend and enemy with my strategems:
Then after that was I an usurer,
And with extorting, cozening, forfeiting,
And tricks belonging unto brokery,
I fill'd the gaols with bankrupts in a year...
But tell me now, how hast thou spent thy time?
Ithamore: Faith, master.
In setting Christian villages on fire,
Chaining of eunuchs, binding galley slaves.
One time I was an hostler at an inn,
And in the night time secretly would I steal
To travellers' chambers, and there cut their throats.
Once at Jerusalem, where the pilgrims kneel'd,
I strewed powder on the marble stones,
And wherewithal their knees would rankle so,
That I have laugh'd a-good to see the cripples
Go limping home to Christendom on stilts.
[173–199, 207–218]

Barabas is delighted that he has gotten the kind of accomplice in evil he was looking for. Indeed, Barabas's catalog of crimes is a list of evil acts Jews were customarily accused of in the Middle Ages. It is also a list of Machiavellian strategems. And what follows in the play is a demonstration of each of these stratagems at work. For example, Barabas, with the help of a forged letter, manages to turn Lodowick and Mathias into jealous hatred of one another over Abigail so that they fight a duel in which both die.

When Abigail finds out what has happened, she leaves her father and joins the nunnery and converts to Christianity.

Her conversion so incenses Barabas that he manages to poison everyone at the nunnery, including Abigail. The scene in which Barabas prepares the poison with the help of Ithamore must have mesmerized the audience. (It reminds

one of Boris Karloff and Peter Lorre in one of their ghoulish movies.) But before Abigail dies she tells the two friars, Jacomo and Barnardine, that her father had poisoned them all. The two friars then confront Barabas. In order to save his skin, Barabas pleads with the friars to baptize him, offering great wealth to some religious house that would have him. The two friars wind up fighting one another over who should convert Barabas. Having gained time, Barabas manages to kill off the two friars in a plot that is both comic and demonic.

Meanwhile, Marlowe develops a marvelous sub-plot in which Ithamore becomes involved with Bellamira, a courtesan, who is after the Jew's gold. She uses her seductive talents to induce Ithamore to do her bidding. The slave is now madly in love, and Bellamira tells him that she will marry him. He responds with poetry that is very Marlowe:

> We will leave this paltry land,
> And sail from hence to Greece, to lovely Greece,
> I'll be thy Jason, thou my golden fleece;
> Where painted carpets o'er the meads are hurl'd,
> And Bacchus' vineyards overspread the world;
> Where woods and forests go in goodly green;
> I'll be Adonis, thou shalt be Love's Queen;
> The meads, the orchards, and the primrose-lanes,
> Thou in those groves, by Dis above,
> Shalt live with me, and be my love.
> [4.2.90–100]

Echoes of *Venus and Adonis* and "Come live with me and be my love." But the lovers need money, and so they concoct a scheme to extort 300 crowns from Barabas. Ithamore writes a letter demanding the money or else he will expose Barabas's crimes. Bellamira's bully attendant, Pilia-Borza, takes the letter to Barabas. But Barabas laughs and jeers and gives the attendant 10 crowns. Infuriated, Ithamore writes another letter demanding 500 crowns.

This time Barabas decides to pay up because he knows that Ithamore can reveal his crimes. But he vows to kill them off. To do so, he will disguise himself as a French musician and bring them poisoned flowers.

In Scene Four, Ithamore, drinking with Bellamira and Pilia-Borza, and quite drunk, reveals the crimes that he and Barabas have committed.

> *Ithamore:* You know Mathias and the Governor's son.
> He and I killed 'em both, and yet never touched 'em....
> I carried the broth that poisoned the nuns;
> And he and I strangled a friar.
> *Bellamira:* You two alone?
> *Ithamore:* We two; and 'twas never known, nor
> never shall be for me.
> [4.4. 18–25]

Bellamira and Pilia-Borza, in an aside, decide to bring this information to the Governor. They also decide that this information warrants more gold from

Barabas. But just then, Barabas enters the scene disguised as a French musician, with a lute, and a poisoned nosegay in his hat. Bellamira requests the flowers, which Barabas happily gives her while speaking with a broken French accent. This is easily the funniest scene in the play, with one villain trying to do in three others. One has to read that scene line by line to appreciate its comic action and repartee. Marlowe skillfully developes character and plot in this effortless way, using dialogue to amuse and create suspense. The audience knows that Barabas will have his comeuppance. But how, we have no idea.

After Barabas in disguise leaves the three lowlifes, Bellamira tells Ithamore to write another letter to Barabas demanding a thousand crowns. But Ithamore says he will send the message by word of mouth.

Act 5, Scene 1, opens with the Governor and First Knight making plans to defend Malta against Calymath, the Turk, who has come to demand tribute. But Bellamira and Pilia-Borza go to the Governor and reveal the crimes of Barabas. Ferenze orders his officers to bring him Barabas and Ithamore. The officers return with both men. Barabas realizes that he didn't put sufficient poison in the flowers to kill them sooner, but believes they will soon die. The Governor puts them all in prison where they all die. The Governor orders all but Barabas to be buried. Barabas is thrown over the wall to be eaten by vultures.

The Governor and his men then hasten on their mission to defend Malta. Barabas, now alone, awakens. He had given himself a sleeping potion. Now, awake, he vows revenge against the Governor by helping Calymath conquer the town.

Presently Calymath enters with Bassoes and Turks and sees Barabas who identifies himself.

> *Calymath:* Art thou the Jew whose goods we heard were sold
> For tribute money?
> *Barabas:* The very same my lord:
> And since that time they have hir'd a slave, my man,
> To accuse me of a thousand villanies.
> I was imprisoned, but scap'd their hands.
> [5.1.74–79]

Barabas then tells Calymath how he and his men can conquer the city by using the water tunnels to get inside and open the gates. "If this be true," says Calymath, "I'll make thee Governor."

In the next scene, Calymath, in triumph, leads the Governor and Knights as prisoners. The Christians groan in defeat, and Calymath proclaims Barabas Governor of Malta.

Calymath then provides Barabas with the protection of a group of Janizary guards, and he and his men then leave to tour the town to see "the wrack we made." Alone, Barabas considers his new position in Malta:

> I now am Governor of Malta; true, —
> But Malta hates me, and, in hating me,

My life's in danger; and what boots it thee,
Poor Barabas, to be the Governor,
Whenas thy life shall be at their command?
[30–34]

Barabas orders Ferneze be brought before him. Barabas asks,

What will thou give me, Governor, to procure
A dissolution of the slavish bands
Wherein the Turk hath yok'd your land and you?
What will you give me if I render you
The life of Calymath, surprise his men,
And in an out-house of the city shut
His soldiers, till I have consum'd 'em all with fire?
[77–83]

Frenеze replies that he will raise "great sums of money for thy recompense," and that Barabas can even remain as Governor. Barabas responds:

Nay, do thou this, Ferneze, and be free.
Governor, I enlarge thee. Live with me;
Go walk about the city, see thy friends.
Tush, send not letters to 'em; go thy self,
And let me see what money thou canst make.
Here is my hand that I'll set Malta free.
And thus we cast it: to a solemn feast
I will invite young Selim Calymath,
Where be thou present, only to perform
One strategem that I'll impart to thee,
Wherein no danger shall betide thy life,
And I will warrant Malta free for ever.
[91–102]

Ferneze agrees. Meanwhile, Calymath has completed his tour of the city and is preparing to leave the island when he receives an invitation from Barabas to join the Governor in a banquet at the citadel. A banquet has also been prepared for his army at an old monastery outside the city. Calymath accepts the invitation.

In Scene 5, we find Barabas and the carpenters making finishing touches on their elaborate trap that will bring Calymath to his death. Ferneze enters with a hundred thousand pounds for Barabas, who is satisfied. But Barabas refuses to take the money until the plan is successfully carried out. He tells the Governor that Calymath's army will be destroyed in the old monastery which has been set up to explode at the appointed signal. As for Calymath and his consorts, Barabas explains:

Here have I made a dainty gallery,
The floor whereof, this cable being cut,
Doth fall asunder, so that it doth sink
Into a deep pit past recovery.

Here, hold that knife; and, when thou seest he comes,
And with his bassoes shall be blithely set,
A warning-piece shall be shot off from the tower,
To give thee knowledge when to cut the cord,
And fire the house. Say, will not this be brave?
[5.5.35–43]

Barabas is impressed with his own ingenuity, and so is Ferneze. And as Calymath and his consorts come to the banquet, Barabas, the ultimate Machiavel, says to himself:

Why, is not this
A kingly kind of trade, to purchase towns
By treachery, and sell 'em by deceit?
Now, tell me worldlings, underneath the sun
If greater falsehood ever has been done?
[48–52]

But then Barabas's doublecross is thwarted by Ferneze's doublecross. Just as Calymath is about to follow Barabas up the stairs to the banquet gallery, Ferneze tells him to stay, "For I will show thee greater courtesy than Barabas would have afforded thee." A charge is sounded, and Ferneze cuts the cord. The floor of the gallery gives way, and Barabas falls into a cauldron placed in a pit. Barabas cries for help, but his fate is sealed, and he dies.

As for Calymath, Ferneze takes him prisoner. His men were killed when the monastery blew up. Ferneze explains:

A Jew's courtesy.
For he that did by treason work our fall,
By treason hath deliver'd thee to us.
Know, therefore, till thy father hath made good
The ruins done to Malta and to us,
Thou canst not part; for Malta shall be freed,
Or Selim ne'er return to Ottoman....
So, march away; and let due praise be given,
Neither to Fate nor Fortune, but to Heaven.
[114–120, 129–130]

Thus ends the play—with Christian triumph. Anyone who reads this remarkable play can have no doubt that Marlowe was capable of writing all of the works in the Shakespeare canon. It is one of the masterpieces of the Elizabethan era.

Today, of course, it would be considered anti-Semitic. While Barabas was the epitome of the Machiavellian villain, other Jews in the play—Abigail, the other Jewish merchants—were law-abiding, normal people. Marlowe also managed to poke fun at the Catholic friars, which amused his Protestant audience. Spain's role in getting Ferneze to break his treaty with the Turks put Spain, England's enemy, in a bad light. While Calymath comes off as a respectable, if not noble, representative of the Ottoman power, Ithamore represents the true Moslem hostility toward Christians.

That Marlowe was able, so successfully, to put all of this in one play is a tribute to his genius. The excerpts we quoted hardly pay service to the poetry throughout the work. That is why it has to be read line by line for its sheer artistry. However, in the climate of today, it is unlikely that we shall ever see it staged.

It is also evident that the man who wrote *The Jew of Malta* was quite capable of writing *The Merchant of Venice* years later. Both plays reflect the genius of one man. Harold Bloom characterizes Shylock as a "comic villain," which can also be said of Barabas, whose outrageous offenses border on the comic. Bloom further writes (pp. 171–2):

> Shakespeare's England did not exactly have a Jewish "problem" or "question" in our later modern terms, only about a hundred or two hundred Jews, presumably most of them converts to Christianity, lived in London. The Jews had been more or less expelled from England in 1290, three centuries before and were not to be more or less readmitted until Cromwell made his revolution. The unfortunate Dr. Lopez, Queen Elizabeth's physician, was hanged, drawn and quartered ... having been more or less framed by the Earl of Essex and so perhaps falsely accused of a plot to poison the Queen. A Portuguese *converso*, ... poor Lopez lives on as a shadowy provocation to the highly successful revival of Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* in 1593–94.

It was inevitable that Shakespeare scholars would have to compare *The Jew of Malta* to *The Merchant of Venice*. They would have to compare Barabas with Shylock. We shall have more to say about that when we do our own comparison and analysis later in this book.

21

Setting the Stage for *Edward II* and *The Massacre at Paris*

Marlowe's last two plays, *Edward II* and *The Massacre at Paris*, are political plays. They have more to do with Marlowe as an agent for Sir Francis Walsingham and Lord Burghley than as a pure poet-playwright. In *Edward II*, as always, Marlowe announces his theme in the opening lines, in which Gaveston, the king's favorite, has just received word that the king's father, who had banished him, is dead, and that Gaveston can once more take his place beside Edward II and share ruling the kingdom. The rest of the play is about how the king's obsession with his favorite finally leads to open rebellion, the alienation of the Queen, the favorite's death and the king's murder.

Marlowe got the basic facts about the real Edward II, whose reign began in 1307, from the second edition of Holinshed's Chronicle (1587). But he added much more of his own creation to the bare facts of the historical Edward. The reason for this is quite evident once one becomes aware of what was happening politically in England and Scotland.

The Massacre at Paris is based on the actual events, which took place in August of 1572. The event solidified Protestant opposition to any thought of a return to Catholic rule by Mary Queen of Scots. But in order to understand the context in which all of this came about, a brief review of the Scottish queen's tragic life provides the needed background.

After the execution of Mary Queen of Scots, all of Elizabeth's attention turned toward Mary's son, James VI of Scotland, who had become the most direct successor to the English throne after Elizabeth. The Act of Succession of 1543 provided for the succession to the throne of Henry the Eighth's three children, Edward (son of Jane Seymour), Mary Tudor (daughter of Catherine of Aragon), and Elizabeth (daughter of Anne Boleyn) in that order. But since Elizabeth had borne no heir, the next in line was Mary Stuart's son James. And so,

Walsingham and Burghley spent much time finding out what the young king was like in the context of a continuing struggle between Catholics and Reformers in Scotland aided and abetted by his mother's French connection. James had been born in 1566 and educated by James Buchanan, Scotland's most learned Calvinist tutor. Thus, he was very well educated. He was 21 when his mother was executed in 1587.

James had become king at 13 months of age after his mother, under duress, abdicated the throne in 1567. He was crowned on July 29, 1567, in the Protestant church just outside the gates of Stirling Castle. James's mother, born in 1542, was the daughter of King James V of Scotland, and Mary of Guise, a devout Catholic from a noble French house that produced nuns, abbots, abbesses, and cardinals. Mary Stuart was born just before her father died. Thus she became Queen of Scotland before she was a week old.

Henry the Eighth saw the newly born Mary Stuart as an ideal match for his son Edward, who became king after Henry's death. But Edward died in 1553 when Mary Stuart was eleven years old. In any case, Mary's mother would have never approved of the marriage since Edward was Protestant and Mary Stuart was Catholic. Indeed, Mary of Guise had sent her young daughter to France to live in the home of Henri II and Catherine de Medici and be educated by her Guise relatives in the Catholic faith.

Mary of Guise remained in Scotland as Regent and protector of her daughter's throne. In France, Mary Stuart was betrothed to the Dauphin, born in 1544. In April 1558, at age 16, Mary Stuart married the Dauphin at the Cathedral of Notre Dame, the very same cathedral in which her mother and father (he by proxy) had been married twenty years before.

On November 17, 1558, Catholic Mary Tudor, "Bloody Mary," Queen of England, died leaving no children. Her throne was inherited by her 25-year-old half-sister Elizabeth, a Protestant. Because Elizabeth was a Protestant, and the Vatican did not recognize the divorce of Henry VIII from Catherine of Aragon or his marriage to Anne Boleyn, the Vatican considered Elizabeth to be illegitimate and therefore barred from succeeding her sister to the throne. With that break in the succession, Mary Stuart would have been the rightful Catholic heir to the throne.

At that juncture, King Henri II of France formally caused his daughter-in-law to be proclaimed Queen of England, Ireland and Scotland. This very political act on the part of the French king was to be flung in Mary Stuart's face for the rest of her life. What's more, in order to guarantee French protection of her throne, Mary signed several Secret Treaties that made Scotland subordinate to France.

In June 1558, Henri II was killed in a horrible tournament accident. His son, the Dauphin, was crowned Francis II at Rheims. Mary Stuart became Queen of France. A great seal was struck bearing the royal figures of Francis and Mary, King and Queen of the French, Scottish, English, and Irish, dated 1559.

But the reign of Francis II did not last long. Always sickly, he died fifteen

months later in December 1560. His younger brother, at age 10, became Charles IX, with his mother Catherine de Medici ruling as Regent. Meanwhile, Mary's mother had died in June of that year. By now, Mary was eighteen years old, and she had no choice but to return to Scotland. But before returning, Mary offered to marry Don Carlos, heir to the Spanish throne. A Spanish-Scottish alliance would not only bring Scotland back into the Vatican fold but would make it possible for Mary to gain the English throne. But the Spanish king, unwilling to get on the bad side of Elizabeth, chose someone else for his son.

Returning to Scotland in August 1561, Mary was welcomed with processions, pageants and banquets. Although Scotland had become officially Protestant by edict of Parliament in August 1560, Mary announced that as Queen of all the Scots she would be tolerant of all religious factions.

By 1563, Mary began to look for a husband in earnest. Elizabeth suggested that Mary consider Henry Stewart, Lord Darnley, the young, handsome son of the Earl of Lennox. Lennox had been exiled to England, where his son had been brought up. Mary had already met Darnley when he came to the French court on an official visit of condolence in 1561. Then he was only 15, a descendant of King James IV of Scotland and Henry VII of England, and also a Catholic. Thus, in Elizabeth's eyes, it seemed that he was a perfect match for her Scottish cousin.

When Darnley visited Mary in early 1564, he was over six feet tall and physically very attractive. Mary fell in love, and they were finally married in July 1565, in a Catholic ceremony, after which Mary proclaimed the 19-year-old bridegroom Henry Stewart, Earl of Ross and Duke of Albany, King of Scots. But John Knox, the intrepid leader of the Reformed church, preached a scathing sermon against the ruling couple. Knox, an ardent Calvinist, insisted that the sovereigns were subject to the sovereignty of God and not merely their own kingly rule. In addition, Elizabeth had a change of heart and disapproved of the marriage.

Objecting to this Catholic match, the queen's Protestant half-brother, the Earl of Moray, one of her father's bastards, declared himself an enemy of the Catholic Lennoxes. This led Mary to establish relations with the Vatican in an effort to get a Papal subsidy. She also began to alienate the nobles by creating a sort of middle-class bureaucracy to run her affairs at court. Also, she engaged a 35-year-old hunchbacked Italian, David Riccio, a musician from Savoy, who then became her secretary. The Protestant nobles were convinced that he was an agent of the Pope.

Meanwhile, Darnley turned out to be a very ineffectual king, preferring the hunt to dull kingly business. The marriage lost its bloom, and Darnley began to drink heavily and behave badly. By December, the queen was pregnant with the future James VI who was born on June 19, 1566.

Aware of the Protestant opposition to her rule, the queen intended to use a session of Parliament to confiscate the lands of the Protestant rebels and put Catholics on an equal footing with Protestants. But the Protestants knew that mutual toleration between the two religions was impossible. Either one or the other must rule. And so, in order to stop the Parliamentary process, a group of

these rebellious nobles conspired to get rid of Mary and have Darnley rule as king. The queen's husband had been brought into the conspiracy by being told that it was Riccio who had caused Mary's pregnancy, not he, which was patently false.

All of this culiminated on March 9, 1566, when the conspirators invaded Mary's apartment at Holyrood during supper and killed Riccio. The poor hunchback died of over fifty stab wounds. Mary survived the assault. The conspirators' plan was to imprison the queen until she gave birth. However, she was able to beat them at their own game. She was able to persuade guilt-ridden Darnley to help her. He had begged for her forgiveness. They were able to escape Holyrood and rode through the night to Dunbar Castle where the queen was able to assemble a force of 8,000 men to defend her.

The murder of Riccio was an important turning point in the life of the Scottish queen. She rescued Riccio's body from a common grave and had it reburied according to the Catholic rite in the royal chapel. By now, what had been love for Darnley had turned to bitter hatred. Yet she was obliged to pretend before the public that her husband was innocent. She wanted a state of normalcy to prevail until the child could be born.

Meanwhile, she turned to the one man whose loyalty she could always count on, notably James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell, and she made him her chief advisor. Bothwell, born in 1536, inherited his father's titles, lands, and hereditary offices in 1556. Though a Protestant, he had supported the government of Mary's mother, and supported Mary as Queen when she returned to Scotland. As Lord Burghley observed, Bothwell was "as naughty a man as liveth and much given to the most detestable vices ... as false as a devil." Burghley was no doubt referring to Bothwell's notorious womanizing.

On June 19, 1566, after much painful labor, the Queen of Scots gave birth to a healthy male child who would one day rule England and Scotland. The birth of a male heir was greeted with great rejoicing in Edinburgh, but with a sense of bitterness by Elizabeth. The birth of James enhanced Mary's merits as a legitimate heir to the English throne.

Meanwhile, as Mary's distaste of her husband grew more intense, her affection toward Bothwell grew stronger. In October of 1566, Mary fell violently ill, and it was thought she would die. But, miraculously, she recovered. However, she feared that had she died, Darnley would have grabbed the throne. In fact, she feared that Darnley might conspire to kill her in order to rule without her. Mary made it known to the Protestant nobles, her protectors, that she longed to be free of Darnley, and they obliged by forming a bond to murder him.

On December 17, 1566, the future James I of England was baptised in a Catholic rite at the chapel in Stirling Castle in an extravagant ceremony. He was barely six months old. Meanwhile, Darnley, who did not attend his son's baptism, took himself to Glasgow where he became ill with syphilis.

On January 20, 1567, Mary went to Glasgow and brought her sick husband back to Edinburgh. Because he needed constant baths to improve his condition,

Darnley chose to stay at a large house on the outskirts of Edinburgh known as Kirk o'Field.

What happened then has been the subject of endless speculation to this very day. As Mary's biographer, Antonia Fraser, writes: "The unreliability of the depositions, many of them made under torture, and the political 're-writing' of history which went on at the time of Mary's trial means that the detailed story of Kirk o'Field can only be guessed at, or pieced together, rather than established with total certainty" (p. 289).

After the Protestant nobles had decided to murder Darnley, the problem became of how to do it. They decided to fill the room beneath Darnley's bedroom with gunpowder and blow him up. But shortly before the explosion was to take place, something alerted Darnley to danger, and he and his servant got out of the house, which immediately exploded. But the conspirators, surrounding the house, grabbed Darnley and his servant as they were escaping, and strangled them to death.

One can imagine the turmoil that broke out in Edinburgh when it became known that the King of Scotland had been murdered. The Queen was beside herself. First, her secretary Riccio and now her husband had been murdered within a year, not by low assassins, but by the chief men of the kingdom. Even though she had wished to be rid of Darnley, whom she suspected of plotting against her own life, she no doubt would have objected to the way it was done. Nevertheless, in her letters to France she claimed that she too had been the target of assassination and was saved only by a miracle.

Bothwell became the prime suspect behind the conspiracy, and even though he had superintended all the preparations for the explosion on the night of the crime, February 9, 1567, he feigned innocence and in April was tried and declared not guilty.

Bothwell's power was now at its height, and the prospect of becoming King of Scotland was indeed intoxicating, and all he had to do to get there was marry the newly widowed Queen. But to do so, he needed the support of his fellow nobles. He drew up a document urging the Queen to choose the strong and resolute Bothwell to fill the vacancy provided by Darnley's death. Eight bishops, nine earls and seven barons signed the bond.

But the Queen refused the proposal, as Fraser narrates, "on the grounds that there were too many scandals about her husband's death, despite the fact that Bothwell had been legally acquitted of complicity by Parliament."

And so, Bothwell, undaunted, decided to take matters into his own hands. With a force of 800 men, Bothwell abducted the Queen while she was traveling from Stirling to Edinburgh. The weakened Queen willingly rode with Bothwell to Dunbar Castle where she was ravished by her abductor. In short, Bothwell had put the Queen in a situation where she had no choice but to marry him. Thus, three weeks later, on May 15, 1567, Bothwell became Mary's third husband and the King of Scotland.

But now, the nobles—both Protestant and Catholic—who had favored the

marriage, strongly disapproved of Bothwell's abduction and ravishing of the Queen. They now urged Mary not to marry Bothwell. But she was so much under Bothwell's spell, that she indeed did marry him over the objections of the lords.

The reactions of Elizabeth and the French to Mary's marriage was that she "had totally lost her head in thus allowing herself to be wedded to the disreputable Bothwell." During the five weeks as consort to the Queen, Bothwell behaved well, projecting a sense of order and stability. The Queen even reiterated her commitment to religious toleration.

Meanwhile, Bothwell's fellow nobles were seething in rebellion against their new king. Matters came to a head on June 15, 1567, when the armed forces of the rebels confronted the royal forces of Mary and Bothwell. The rebels urged Mary to abandon Bothwell. She refused. However, in order to avoid bloodshed, a compromise was arranged. Bothwell would be given a safe-conduct to return to Dunbar, while the Queen would remain with the rebels. Thus, Mary and Bothwell, after a warm and emotional embrace, were separated, never to see each other again.

Mary's surrender to the rebels caused her even greater pain as she was assailed as an adultress who had become the willing bride of a murderer. She was imprisoned at Lochleven Castle where she awaited her fate. Bothwell, at liberty, tried to organize a force to rescue Mary. But when he was officially called to answer for murdering Darnley, kidnapping the Queen, making her promise to marry him, and failed to answer the call, whatever support he had rallied rapidly melted away. Bothwell was now being hunted as a fugitive from justice.

Mary was now being urged to divorce Bothwell. But she refused. She did not want to compromise the legitimacy of her unborn child who would be considered a bastard and thus illegitimate. However, the Queen, in her fourteenth week of pregnancy, miscarried what turned out to be twins.

Her captors were now determined to have Mary abdicate the throne in favor of her infant son. She refused. They threatened to kill her. And so, on July 29, 1567, Mary signed the papers of abdication and the infant James was crowned king. Her half-brother, the Earl of Moray, became regent. Meanwhile, Bothwell was able to evade capture and escaped to Norway.

To justify Mary's continued imprisonment, Mary was herself publicly blamed for the death of Darnley. But the Scots people could see for themselves that many nobles, far more intimately involved in the crime than Mary, were now running the government. In the meantime, all of the lesser individuals involved in the murder of Darnley were publicly executed.

Meanwhile, Mary was determined to escape from Lochleven Castle, which was located on an island in the middle of the lake. The laird of the castle was Sir William Douglas, half-brother of the Earl of Moray. They had the same mother, Margaret Erskine, but not the same father. His father was Robert Douglas, nephew of the Earl of Mar, his mother's brother.

The residents at the castle included the laird, his wife, Lady Douglas, two

young Douglas girls, aged 14 and 15, the laird's mother, and a younger brother, George Douglas, a handsome young man who virtually fell in love with the 24-year-old Mary the moment he met her. According to Fraser, "The young man was personable and gallant, and only too happy to see in his sovereign a frail and helpless woman, the victim of a cruel fate. Her fragile beauty drawn with suffering, coupled with her romantic history, could not fail to move him further; Cecil [Lord Burghley] said afterwards that he fell into 'a fantasy of love' with the queen."

The queen wrote letters to Elizabeth and her former mother-in-law Catherine de Medici for help in escaping the island. But it was with George Douglas's help that Mary was finally able to escape from the castle prison. In the late spring, Lady Douglas gave birth to a child, which relaxed surveillance over Mary. The key to a successful escape was getting off the island to the mainland. An elaborate escape plot was hatched by George Douglas with the help of several confederates, including Willy Douglas, an orphaned cousin of the Douglases, who quickly became devoted to Mary. Thus, on May 2, after ten and a half months of captivity, Mary was smuggled off the island on a small boat and was finally free.

News of Mary's escape rallied her supporters throughout Scotland, particularly in the west. The Regent Moray was outraged. But in her desire to be restored to her throne at all costs, Mary was prepared to negotiate with Moray, her once-loved half-brother, who rejected the idea. By then Mary's army of supporters had grown to 6,000 as opposed to Moray's 4,000. A battle was fought in the village of Langside where Mary's army, for a variety of reasons, was badly beaten.

Mary, who had watched the battle on horseback from a nearby hill, was forced to flee. She fled into the southwestern territories that were still strongly Catholic. Reaching the Maxwell castle at Terregles, Mary had a brief moment in which to decide whether to remain in Scotland, go to France, or seek refuge in England. She chose England because she believed that Elizabeth would help her.

Thus, on May 16, Mary, with a small party of loyalists, embarked on a small fishing boat to England. They arrived at the small port of Workington that evening. The deputy governor, warned in advance of Mary's arrival, had her installed in semi-captivity at Carlisle castle. Mary's hope was that Elizabeth would provide her with an army that would enable her to recover the throne in Scotland.

But Elizabeth's advisers were in a quandary. If they refused to help her retrieve her throne, at Moray's expense, and she remained at liberty in England, she would become the focus of Catholic loyalty. If they permitted her to go to France, that might lead to a French invasion of Scotland and the overthrow of the Protestant regime. And then there was the unresolved matter of Darnley's murder. It provided Elizabeth with the pretext for not receiving Mary at court and keeping her confined as a guest-captive.

Elizabeth insisted that Mary subject herself to a trial to determine whether

or not she was responsible for Darnley's death. An investigatory trial took place at Westminster, which ended on January 11, 1569, with neither side having won. Moray had brought incriminating documents from Scotland, including the infamous "Casket Letters," while Mary's commissioners testified in her defense. Mary herself had not been permitted to travel to London to plead her case. The verdict of the tribunal was that neither party had been able to prove sufficiently anything against the other.

As a result of the non-verdict, Mary became a prisoner of Elizabeth's for the indefinite future. She was considered too dangerous to be set free. She was moved from Bolton to Tutbury Castle in Staffordshire where Elizabeth appointed George Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, to be her jailer.

Meanwhile, it was thought that a marriage with a Protestant Englishman might open the door to Mary's freedom and return to the Scottish throne. The potential bridegroom was widower Thomas Howard, Fourth Duke of Norfolk, aged 33. The marriage negotiations were conducted in strict secrecy from Elizabeth. But when Elizabeth found out, she was enraged. She imprisoned Norfolk in the Tower.

On January 11, 1570, Moray was assassinated in Edinburgh by a Hamilton, one of Moray's most vicious enemies. James's grandfather, Lennox, was chosen as the new Regent. Mary then tried to reestablish contact with her son, but James had been told that his mother had cold-bloodedly murdered his father to marry her lover.

Norfolk was released from the Tower in August 1570 and immediately became involved in the Ridolfi plot, a highly impractical scheme dreamed up by an Italian banker based in London. It involved an invasion of England by Spanish troops from the Netherlands, an uprising of Catholics in England, Norfolk's marriage to Mary, the imprisonment of Elizabeth, and the placement of Mary on the English throne.

But the plot was uncovered. Norfolk was arrested, tried for treason in January 1572 and executed in June. As Antonia Fraser put it: "Mary was now seen as a foreign-born Catholic spider, sitting in the centre of England spinning her webs in order to depose the English Protestant queen."

But what happened later in France shocked English Protestants and sealed Mary's fate as a permanent prisoner in England.

22

The Massacre at Paris and Philip Sidney

A brief but excellent summary of the horrendous St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre in Paris, which began on August 24, 1572, and in which thousands of Huguenots were slaughtered, is given in the Eleventh Edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* as follows:

> The initiative for the crime rests with Catherine de Medici. Irritated and disquieted by the growing influence of Admiral Coligny, who against her wishes was endeavouring to draw Charles IX into a war with Spain, she resolved at first to have him assassinated. The blow failed, and the admiral was only wounded. The attempt, however, infuriated the Huguenots, who had flocked to Paris for the wedding of Henry of Navarre and Marguerite de Valois. Charles IX declared that the assassin should receive condign punishment. Catherine then conceived the idea of killing at a blow all the Huguenot leaders, and of definitely ruining the Protestant party. After holding a council with the Catholic leaders, including the duke of Anjou, Henry of Guise, the marshal de Tavannes, the duke of Nevers, and Rene de Birague, the keeper of the seals, she persuaded the king that the massacre was a measure of public safety, and on the evening of the 23rd of August succeeded in wringing his authorization from him.... The massacre began on Sunday at daybreak, and continued in Paris till the 17th of September. Once let loose, it was impossible to restrain the Catholic populace. From Paris the massacre spread to the provinces till the 3rd of October.... Francois Hotman estimates the number killed in the whole of France at 50,000.

It so happened that Elizabeth's ambassador at Paris at that time was Sir Francis Walsingham, who was able to recount first-hand the frightful events that took place. Visiting Walshingham was Sir Philip Sidney. All of the perpetrators of the crime were Mary Stuart's relatives, her former mother-in-law, her former brother-in-law, and members of the Guise family.

Although Mary Stuart had nothing to do with the massacre, nevertheless it reflected on her reputation as a devout Catholic, challenging Elizabeth as the rightful occupant of the English throne. She was seen as an ally of the murder-

ers of the Huguenots. Indeed, Catherine de Medici received the congratulations of all the Catholic powers, and Pope Gregory XIII commanded bonfires to be lighted and a medal to be struck.

It is generally believed that *The Massacre at Paris* was the last play written by Marlowe under his own name. According to Henslowe's Diary, its first performance took place on January 30, 1593, after which the theatres were closed because of the plague. The play was again performed in June, July, and September of 1594.

The plot is virtually a straightforward but compressed retelling of the horrible events that took place in Paris, to which Sir Francis Walsingham and the 18-year-old Philip Sidney were witnesses. The characters were not fiction but the actual people involved. Emma Marshall Denkinger, in her biography, *Immortal Sidney,* writes:

> It was two hours after midnight on the morning of Sunday, August 24. Shortly, with dawn, would come the feast of Saint Bartholomew. Suddenly the great bell of Saint Germain l'Auxerrois began to toll. Soon every steeple in Paris had taken up the sound. The air was ashiver with brazen banging—the signal for the massacre!
>
> Out of the darkness, candles blazed up at casements. The streets must be light, lest the Huguenots escape, lest Catholics be slain. To guard against that, the murderers wore white crosses on their hats, and on their arms, white kerchiefs....
>
> In the forefront of the assassins was the Duke of Guise. Hastening to the Admiral's dwelling, he ordered his servants to go in and kill Coligny. When the fellow threw down the corpse, the Duke turned it over with his foot. He wanted no mistake this time! Then, satisfied as to his own vengeance, he went on to wholesale public slaughters....
>
> A mile out of the city in the Faubourg-Saint-Germain, the tocsin was not heard.... While Paris was reeling in carnage, the household of Walsingham slept.... But as the dull day dawned, the noise of confused shots, of cries, of church bells ringing at unaccountable times caused Walsingham to send a servant to ... discover what was happening.
>
> Before evening, Walsingham's house was crowded with English refugees.... All were terrified. Each group had its tale of atrocities.... By now there were many dead in the lanes and gardens of Faubourg-Saint-Germain.

The massacre would haunt Walsingham and Sidney for the rest of their lives—and also Christopher Marlowe. As Sidney's page, the young Christopher Marlowe was also able to experience the massacre first hand.

Young aristocrats like Sidney, when they embarked on a European tour, usually had a page to take care of the many chores involved in travel. Marlowe was at the right age to be such a boy servant. It certainly solves the problem of wondering where young Marlowe was before he entered the King's School in Canterbury.

If young Marlowe was, indeed, part of Sidney's retinue, he may have also known Nicholas Faunt, a Canterburian, who knew the Marlowes and was working for Francis Walsingham as a courier. It was Faunt who brought back to Elizabeth an eye-witness account of the massacre. And so, Marlowe too would not

only have witnessed the massacre, of which he later wrote a play, but he would have traveled with Sidney on the rest of his tour. Sidney, a devout Calvinist, was going to meet the most important Protestants of Europe.

Philip Sidney, the son of Sir Henry Sidney, was also a Dudley through his mother, who was the daughter of John Dudley, the Duke of Northumberland. It was he who was executed for his role in the attempt to put his son Guildford on the throne with Lady Jane Grey in place of Catholic Mary Tudor who was set to succeed her brother Edward VI. But Mary, with much popular support, won the battle of succession and executed Northumberland, his son and Lady Jane Grey. The rest of Northumberland's sons— Robert, Ambrose, John, and Henry— were spared. Sidney's uncle Robert Dudley became Earl of Leicester, Elizabeth's legendary favorite.

Robert Dudley and Elizabeth were both born on the same day and in the same hour. Together they had been Mary's prisoners in the Tower. Thus, they were intimate childhood friends. And when Elizabeth became Queen she chose Dudley as her closest advisor and Master of the Queen's Horse.

While in Paris, before the Massacre, Philip was able to meet a brilliant group of people, including staunch Calvinist Admiral Coligny, Petrus Ramus, the French philosopher whose interpretation of Aristotle had made him famous throughout Europe, and Hubert Languet, a scholar and statesmen, who had lived in Denmark and Lapland and was something of a citizen of the world. He and Philip became fast friends. Languet took a strong interest in Sidney, in whom he saw "a store of purest gold." His biographer writes: "Philip loved him devoutedly, enough to endure all the good advice. And never was the mind of a youth shaped by pressures of greater dignity." There were other influences as well. Denkinger writes (p. 57):

> This Philip was no ordinary young man! With a mind as open, he was hearing Francois Hotman enunciate certain thoughts with regard to free governments which would find an echo in a French Revolution centuries later. He was hearing Philippe de Mornay voice ideas on tyrants which would annoy Stuarts yet unborn, thanks to a pernicious theory to the effect that if a monarch did not behave himself, he might be eliminated, with propriety.

Of course, that was pure, unadulterated Calvinism. If young Marlowe was in a position to overhear some of these conversations and observe how these great men behaved, he too was learning far more than he would have ever learned in his father's shop.

In September 1572 Sidney and his retinue left Paris. After making their way through the Vosges mountains and the Rhine valley, they reached their first destination, Frankfurt, Germany, where Languet was already there to greet him. Denkinger writes:

> Fittingly enough, while Philip remained there, he and Languet resided with the printer Andreas Wechel, a fine old humanist in his sixties. Like them, he had escaped Bartholomew. He had known Philip's honored friend, Ramus, in Paris where he printed all his works.

> Scholars from all over the world came to Wechel's shop. As other men met at inns to drink and gloat over the day's adventures, scholars foregathered here.

And so, Sidney, Languet and Wechel spent the ensuing fall and winter weeks reading, discussing, learning. Sidney, and possibly young Marlowe, were the beneficiaries of this lively intellectual atmosphere.

When the warmer months came in 1573, Languet was summoned to the imperial court in Vienna. He urged Philip to come with him. But Philip first wanted to visit the University of Heidelberg where he met Henri Etienne who had spread the New Learning throughout France. They became fast friends. They traveled together to Strassburg where Etienne gave Philip his famous edition of Plato in three volumes. From there Philip journeyed to Basle, where he paid hommage at the tomb of Erasmus. He finally reached Vienna in September 1573.

No sooner was he in Vienna than he told Languet that he longed to go to Italy with his young friends. Protestants regarded Italy as a hotbed of moral corruption. Languet was concerned that Philip was too young for such a journey, but finally gave his consent. Denkinger writes:

> When he finally took leave of Languet in his long furred gown, Philip carried south with him many injunctions and warnings. He must take care of what he ate, and drank. He must write regularly. Above all, he must not return the "Italianate Englishman," who was the very devil incarnate, wearing ruffs of immoral cut, swearing strange oaths, and practising "foreign" vices.

In Venice Philip was taken in hand by the Count of Hanau. He was the perfect guide to a city of great art and history. In 1571, Venice rose to defend Famagusta and a few months later defeated the Turk at Lepanto. Nevertheless, Venice was forced to cede Cyprus to the Turk and also pay indemnity.

On February 26, 1574 Philip sat for his portrait by Paolo Veronese. The painting took three days. Languet considered it elegant. From Venice, Philip went to Genoa and Florence. In Padua Philip took a house where he could study. Walsingham had studied law at the University, and a number of Englishmen were in residence. In November 1574, Philip journeyed to Poland, but then spent the winter in Vienna. There time passed quickly with Languet directing his studies. The Emperor's esquire of the stable, Pugliano, trained Philip for tilt of which he was to become quite adept.

In March of 1575 Philip began his journey back to England. By the last day of May he was in Antwerp waiting for the ship home. His bags were full of books and maps, which young Marlowe no doubt helped care for. The young future playwright was 11 years old, and virtually everything he learned by accompanying the eminently intelligent and interesting Philip Sidney would find itself in his future plays.

Back in England, young Marlowe probably remained in service to Sidney and lived in the family mansion in London or at Penshurst. Meanwhile, Uncle Robert, the Earl of Leicester, brought Sidney to court where he became one of Elizabeth's courtiers as royal cupbearer. Marlowe was no doubt at his master's

beck and call during this period, which enabled him to observe Gloriana's court life in all its pageantry and follies.

One of the great occasions that the 11-year-old Marlowe probably attended as Sidney's page was the great party that Leicester threw for Elizabeth at Kenilworth in July 1575 during the Queen's summer progress. The romantic gaieties, the ambrosial feasts, the ceremonious devotion to the Queen, the sparkling entertainments, the merrymaking, the idyllic twilight interludes with exquisite music and dance will all be found years later in a play called *A Midsummer Night's Dream.*

In February 1577, Sidney once more had the occasion to travel to the Continent. Elizabeth had ordered him to condole the death of Maximilian II in Vienna. Among his suite were two of his closest friends, Edward Dyer and Fulke Greville. As ambassador of the Queen, his train was richly appointed. Denkinger writes (p. 112):

> A number of Elizabeth's most practised diplomats swelled his splendid train, since she believed in impressing the neighbors, especially when she could do so for mere "board wages" and horse hire. As fine as money (and credit) could make him, Philip went forth in all the magnificence due to his magnificent mistress and his quite as magnificent uncle.

Their first stop was Brussels. A few days later Sidney rode over to Louvain to see Don John of Austria, the handsome bastard brother of Philip II who was now Viceroy in the Low Countries. He had defeated the Turk at Lepanto six years earlier and had become the idol of Catholic Europe. Denkinger writes (p. 113):

> Sidney's impressions of Don John have not come down to us. But he must have been stirred by the sight of this man who at Lepanto had traveled from galley to galley in a tiny frigate, standing in the prow in light armor with a crucifix in his hand, heartening his Christian hordes against the terrible Turk.

Two weeks later, in Heidelberg, Sidney wrote Walsingham that Don John was talking of marrying Mary Queen of Scots and stirring up trouble in England. But Don John died suddenly before his plan could be fulfilled.

Part of Sidney's mission was to study the new incumbents of thrones, to observe conditions in Germany and the Empire, and to report on the prospects of a league of the Protestant princes of Europe. The party reached Vienna in April 1577, and Sidney paid his respects to Maximilian's widow, the Empress Maria. He then proceeded to see if the projected League was a possibility. Denkinger writes: (p. 116):

> On May 1st, 1577 he had a conference with Prince Lodowick, the new Elector of the Rhine. Bad feeling between his brother who was a Lutheran and Casimir who like the dead father was a Calvinist, threatened an immediate rupture. When Sidney saw him, Lodowick was industriously uprooting Calvinism.

Sidney concluded that the disunity among the princes made a league of Protestant princes an unlikely prospect. But he had opened the way for further

negotiations. Just as he was about to leave, Sidney received orders to visit the Prince of Orange at Gertruidenberg in the Low Countries. He found the prince, who was the power behind the Dutch rebels, to be of Puritan simplicity, with a depth of religious faith Sidney hoped to emulate.

By June 10, 1577, Sidney was home, and we suppose Marlowe was also. At age 13, Sidney must have talked with his highly intelligent young page about his future education. He probably had been informed that young Christopher was eligible for a scholarship at the King's School in Canterbury. The scholarships were offered to worthy boys from poor families aged 9 to 15. Marlowe obtained his scholarship on January 14, 1578/9 and began studies in the Michaelmas term of 1578/9. And so, Marlowe got his scholarship rather late at age 14, having stayed with Sidney as long as he could.

But we can imagine the incredible experience and knowledge of language and geography that Marlowe brought with him when he entered the King's School. By then, the young poet had gotten to know some of the most influential people in the artistocracy. Through Sidney he had gotten to know Walsingham, Leicester, Burghley, Greville, Dyer, Sidney's little sister Mary who married Henry Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, and who knows who else. And much of what he learned and experienced would wind up in his future plays.

As for *The Massacre at Paris,* it was no doubt written as literary propaganda in the ongoing war between Protestants and Catholics in England in which Marlowe had played his part as an agent for Walsingham and Burghley. The English public had to be reminded of what had happened in 1572 when Protestant men of honor were murdered by the perfidious Catholics in their quest for political power. The message was that Catholics must never be permitted to gain the throne of England.

The play opens in Paris, with the French king, Charles, praising the marriage between the Huguenot King of Navarre and Catholic Margaret of Valois as a sign of a religious league between the two factions.

The Duke of Guise, the mastermind behind the massacre along with Catherine de Medici, enters in Scene Two, and in a lengthy soliloquy reveals his evil philosophy of politics. He says:

> Now, Guise, begins those deep-engender'd thoughts
> To burst abroad those never-dying flames
> Which cannot be extinguish'd but by blood.
> Oft have I levell'd, and at last have learn'd
> That peril is the chiefest way to happiness,
> And resolution honour's fairest aim.
> What glory is there in a common good
> That hangs for every peasant to achieve?
> That like I best that flies beyond my reach....
> For this, this head, this heart, this hand and sword,
> Contrives, imagines, and fully executes
> Matters of import, aim'd at by many,
> Yet understood by none....

The Mother Queen works wonders for my sake
And in my love entombs the hope of France,
Rifling the bowels of her treasury,
To supply my wants and necessity....
Then, Guise, since thou hast all the cards within thy hands
To shuffle or cut, take this as surest thing:
That, right or wrong, thou deal thyself king....
The plot is laid, and things shall come to pass
Where resolution strives for victory.
[II. 31–39, 49–52, 73–76, 85–87, 104–105]

The massacre takes place as planned. There is a gruesome scene in which Admiral Coligny is brutally murdered. Marlowe also provides us with a harrowing scene in which the philosopher Ramus, the friend of Philip Sidney, is brutally stabbed to death on orders from the Guise.

As a result of the massacre, King Charles dies of remorse and is succeeded by his younger brother, Henry. The Guise himself is murdered by King Henry's men in Scene XXI. When the King is shown Guise's body, he says:

Ah, this sweet sight is physic to my soul!
Go fetch his son for to behold his death.
Surcharg'd with guilt of thousand massacres,
Monsieur of Lorraine, sink away to hell!
And in remembrance of those bloody broils
To which thou didst allure me, being alive,
And here in presence of you all, I swear
I ne'er was King of France until this hour.
This is the traitor that hath spent my gold
In making foreign wars and civil broils.
Did he not draw a sort of English priests
From Douai to the seminary at Rheims
To hatch forth treason 'gainst their natural Queen?
Did he not cause the King of Spain's huge fleet
To threaten England and to menace me?
Did he not injure Monsieur that's deceas'd?
Hath he not made me in the Pope's defence
To spend the treasure that should strength my land,
In civil broils between Navarre and me?
Tush, to be short, he meant to make me monk,
Or else to murder me and so be King.
Let Christian princes that shall hear of this
(As all the world shall know our Guise is dead)
Rest satisfied with this, that here I swear,
Ne'er was there king of France so yok'd as I.
[XXI. 91–115]

Note Marlowe's reference to the seminary at Rheims, where he had been sent by Walsingham to spy on young English Catholics being trained "to hatch forth treason 'gainst their natural Queen."

King Henry then orders his murderers to strangle the Cardinal of Lorraine

to death. When Duke Dumaine hears of this, he vows revenge. A friar promises to kill the King. He will gain access by delivering a letter. This he does at an audience with the King whom he stabs. The King quickly pulls out the knife and kills the Friar. As he lies wounded, the King calls for the English Agent, Queen Elizabeth's ambassador, and tells him:

> Agent for England, send thy mistress word
> What this detested Jacobin hath done.
> Tell her, for all this, that I hope to live,
> Which if I do, the papal monarch goes
> To wrack, and [th']antichristian kingdom falls.
> These bloody hands shall tear his tripple crown
> And fire accursed Rome about his ears.
> I'll fire his crazed buildings, and incense
> The papal towers to kiss the holy earth.
> Navarre, give me thy hand: I here do swear
> To ruinate that wicked Church of Rome
> That hatcheth up such bloody practices,
> And here protest eternal love to thee,
> And to the Queen of England specially,
> Whom God hath bless'd for hating papistry.
> [XXIV. 55–69]

The king is then informed that the knife was poisoned and that he will die. Turning to Navarre, he says:

> I die, Navarre; come bear me to my sepulchre.
> Salute the Queen of England in my name,
> And tell her, Henry dies her faithful friend.
> [XXIV. 103–105]

Thus ends the play, which covers important political events from 1573 to 1589—from the death of Jeanne d'Albret, Queen of Navarre, on the eve of the Massacre, to the assassination of Henry III in 1589, a period of sixteen years. It is probable that Marlowe consulted with his boss, Walsingham, when writing the play, since Walsingham had been a witness to the massacre.

There were detailed accounts of the Massacre published in England as early as 1574. But the events in the play that took place after the Massacre may have been gathered by Marlowe from Walsingham who was well aware of what was going on in France. Walsingham died in 1590, but the events in the play end in 1589. The first recorded production of the play, by Lord Strange's Men at the Rose in 1593, is indicated by an entry in Henslowe's diary in January of that year. But it may have been produced earlier before Henslowe began keeping his diary.

The Massacre at Paris is Marlowe's shortest play, half the length of *Tamburlaine*, *The Jew of Malta*, or *Edward II*. That may be because the version that exists today is not the original fuller and longer version as written by Marlowe. H.J. Oliver, in his Introduction to the play, writes (pp. lix, lii):

> All the evidence points, then, to the probability that the Octavo *Massacre at Paris* is a corrupt text put together by memorial reconstruction.... *The Massacre at Paris* is almost certainly one of the group of Elizabethan texts—best known from the Shakespearian "Bad Quartos" such as the First Quartos of *Hamlet* and *Romeo and Juliet*—that are corrupted or "stolne and surreptitious" versions of the plays as written and, probably as originally acted.

Interestingly enough, there exists at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C., a manuscript page from *The Massacre at Paris.* Some scholars believe that it was, indeed, written by Marlowe himself. If that is true, then we have an example of Marlowe's handwriting that may prove crucial in getting to the bottom of the authorship mystery.

23

Edward II

As already noted, *Edward II* is a political play with several themes that emerge as the natural consequences of the King's having adopted Gaveston, a base-born Frenchman, as his favorite. He elevates him to positions of power and privilege that anger the King's peers, incite rebellion, and result in the murder of the favorite, the alienation of the Queen, and the final murder of the King himself. Each moment of the play is filled with high drama and conflict involving political issues that were very much on the minds of Marlowe's audiences. And as a master of the horror show, Marlowe gives us a royal murder that is certainly one of the strangest and most powerful murder scenes in English drama.

The notion that a king's obsession with a favorite could result in tragic political consequences was no doubt suggested by the obsession that 14-year-old James VI of Scotland had for his handsome French cousin, Esme Stuart d'Aubigny, whom the Guise and Catherine de Medici had sent to Scotland in 1579 to convert James to Catholicism. It created such dangerous political conflict between the Reform and Catholics in Scotland, that James finally was forced to get rid of Esme in order to survive.

Both Walsingham and Burghley had watched these developments very closely as they touched on the larger problem England had with Catholic attempts to depose Elizabeth and install James's mother on the throne. They were haunted by what would happen should the Catholics regain power in England and bring about another St. Bartholomew's massacre.

While Esme had been sent to seduce the young Scottish king, the future king of England, into becoming a Catholic, the King actually turned the tables and tried to convert Esme. Otto Scott, in his brilliant biography of James, writes (p. 100):

> The subject of Esme's religion was a key in both his relationship with James and to his rise in Scotland. The young king was immensely learned in a theological sense, although his ardor was less a matter of faith than of training. His effort to convert his beloved could not, obviously, fail without rupturing their relationship. On the other hand, d'Aubigny, already living one lie, was too astute to betray skepticism in an area so important. He and his masters in France had known he would have to assume whatever guise was necessary to achieve his goal—and that he would have to do so credibly.

Religious conflict is not a theme in *Edward II* since England was then Catholic. But obsession with a favorite is, and Marlowe makes this clear in the very opening lines of the play in which Gaveston reads a letter from newly crowned Edward announcing the end of his exile. He speaks and reveals something of his own selfish motives in his attachment to the young king, exercising his new sovereign power:

> "My father is deceas'd. Come, Gaveston,
> And share the kingdom with thy dearest friend."
> Ah, words that make me surfeit with delight!
> What greater bliss can hap to Gaveston
> Than live and be the favorite of a king?
> Sweet prince, I come! These, these thy amorous lines
> Might have enforc'd me to have swum from France
> And, like Leander, gasp'd upon the sand
> So thou would'st smile and take me in thine arms!
> [1.1.1–9]

Note the reference to Leander from Marlowe's poem *Hero and Leander*, which would not be published until 1598. Gaveston later says:

> I must have wanton poets, pleasant wits,
> Musicians that with touching of a string
> May draw the pliant King which way I please.
> Music and poetry is his delight.
> Therefore I'll have Italian masks by night,
> Sweet speeches, comedies, and pleasing shows;
> And in the day when he shall walk abroad,
> Like sylvan nymphs my pages shall be clad:
> My men, like satyrs grazing on the lawns,
> Shall with their goat feet dance an antic hay.
> [51–60]

And so, Gaveston's idea of perfect happiness is pleasure and power and the ability to manipulate the king. The scene then shifts to the palace where the king is already confronted with disgruntled peers who want him to send Gaveston back into exile. Young Mortimer and his uncle are particularly upset because they had sworn to uphold the wishes of the king's father, that Gaveston never be permitted to return. Lancaster speaks:

> My lord, why do you thus incense your peers
> That naturally would love and honor you
> But for that base and obscure Gaveston?
> Four earldoms have I, besides Lancaster—
> Derby, Salisbury, Lincoln, Leicester—
> These will I sell to give my soldiers pay
> Ere Gaveston shall stay within the realm!
> Therefore if he be come, expel him straight!
> [99–106]

But the King will not be swayed, and thus the conflict between him and his peers becomes ever more threatening. When Gaveston and the King are once more together, the King immediately makes him Lord High Chamberlain, Chief Secretary of State, Earl of Cornwall, King and Lord of Man. Gaveston is exhilarated. He says:

> It shall suffice me to enjoy your love,
> Which whiles I have, I think myself as great
> As Caesar riding in the Roman street,
> With captive kings at his triumphant car.
> [171–174]

This is certainly a reference to the famous scene in *Tamburlaine II*, in which the Scythian warrior has his captive kings pull his chariot. When the Bishop of Coventry complains to the king about Gaveston, he is roughed up and sent to the Tower. His house is seized for Gaveston's benefit. Delighted, Gaveston remarks:

> What should a priest do with so fair a house?
> A prison may best beseem his holiness.
> [206–207]

News of this incenses the peers even more, especially when they learn that Gaveston has been made an earl. Young Mortimer, expressing the sentiments of the peers, says:

> Were all the earls and barons of my mind,
> We'll hale him from the bosom of the King
> And at the court-gate hang the peasant up:
> Who swoln with venom of ambitious pride
> Will be the ruin of the realm and us.
> [1.2.28–32]

The Archbishop of Canterbury arrives, expressing outrage at what has been done to the Bishop of Coventry. Young Mortimer asks: "Then will you join us that be his peers to banish or behead that Gaveston?" Mortimer is indeed concerned with the legal justification of their rebellion.

Queen Isabel then enters and tells young Mortimer:

> ...The King regards me not,
> But dotes upon the love of Gaveston.
> He claps his cheeks, hangs about his neck,
> Smiles in his face, whispers in his ears,
> And when I come he frowns, as who should say,
> "Go whither thou wilt seeing I have Gaveston!"
> [49–54]

Elder Mortimer comments: "Is it not strange that he is thus bewitch'd?" The Archbishop then explains that he and his counsellors will meet with the King and try to persuade him to banish Gaveston. All of this turns on the argument of whether or not it is legal to take arms against the King.

In the scene that follows, the political issues are clearly delineated when the King and Gaveston, seated side by side, confront the nobles. Elder Mortimer remarks: "What man of noble birth can brook this sight?" To which the King replies: "Lay hands on that traitor Mortimer!" Elder Mortimer responds: "Lay hands on that traitor Gaveston!" Marlowe, a master of theatrical commotion, continues:

Kent [the king's brother]: Is this the duty you owe your King?
Warwick: We know our duties. Let him know his peers.
King Edward: Whither will you bear him? Stay, or ye shall die!
Elder Mortimer: We are no traitors, therefore threaten not.
Gaveston: No, threaten not, my lord, but pay them home. Were I a king—
Young Mortimer: Thou villain, wherefore talk'st thou of a king
That hardly art a gentleman by birth!
King Edward: Were he a peasant, being my minion,
I'll make the proudest of you stoop to him.
[I.4.22–31]

The nobles remove Kent and Gaveston. The Archbishop and the nobles finally force Edward to sign a document banishing Gaveston. Edward tries to bribe them with new positions of power, if only they would leave him "some nook or corner left to frolic with my dearest Gaveston."

Young Mortimer asks: "Why should you love him whom the world hates so?" Edward replies: "Because he loves me more than the whole world!" This is the kind of juvenile statement that clearly describes Edward's adolescent state of mind, very much like the mind of teenage King James of Scotland when he was in love with Esme. Nevertheless, the King is forced to sign the document. Young Mortimer remarks: "The king is love-sick for his minion." The nobles then leave, and Edward is left alone to contemplate his unhappy state.

How fast they run to banish him I love!
They would not stir, would it to do me good.
Why should a king be subject to a priest?
Proud Rome, that hatchest such imperial grooms,
For these thy superstitious taper-lights,
Wherewith thy antichristian churches blaze,
I'll fire thy crazed buildings and enforce
The papal towers to kiss the lowly ground!
With slaughter'd priests may Tiber's channel swell,
And banks rais'd higher with their sepulchers!
As for the peers that back the clergy thus,
If I be King, not one of them shall live.
[95–106]

Of course, that's exactly what Henry VIII did when the Pope refused to let him divorce Catherine of Aragon. With the destruction of the monasteries, Henry ushered in the Protestant reformation in England. Marlowe, as a child, no doubt played among the ruins of the monastery in Canterbury. As an insight

into Edward's psychology, Marlowe has him fantasize what he would do to the peers. Words of an adolescent king living in a fantasy world in which his minion rules. When this play was written no one knew what to expect when James would become king of England.

In order to comply with his forced agreement to send Gaveston into exile, Edward decides to make Gaveston governor of Ireland and says "there abide till fortune call thee home." The king and Gaveston then exchange pictures and embrace. When Queen Isabella suddenly appears, Edward lashes out at her: "Fawn not on me, French strumpet! Get thee gone!" Which echoes Hamlet's famous rejection of Ophelia, "Get thee to a nunnery!"

What ensues is a shouting match between Isabella and Gaveston who accuses the Queen of having an affair with Mortimer. Edward then tells Isabella that unless she can get Gaveston's exile repealed, "thou com'st not in my sight."

The Queen, alone, bemoans her fate, which she blames on Gaveston, "for never doted Jove on Ganymede so much as he on cursed Gaveston." The reference to Jove and Ganymede reminds us of the opening scene in *Dido.*

The Queen then persuades young Mortimer to bring Gaveston back from exile in order to have him secretly murdered. The nobles agree to the plan. They inform the King that Gaveston's exile has been repealed. The King now is so overjoyed that he kisses the Queen. "Let this be a second marriage 'twixt thyself and me," he tells Isabella. The King then rewards the nobles with new positions of importance. He also informs them of his intention of marrying Gaveston, Earl of Cornwall, to his niece, the daughter of the late Earl of Gloucester. On this happy note, Edward exits the stage, leaving the two Mortimers alone. The Elder Mortimer speaks to his nephew:

> Nephew, I must to Scotland. Thou stayest here.
> Leave now to oppose thyself against the King.
> Thou seest by nature he is mild and calm.
> And seeing his mind so dotes on Gaveston,
> Let him without controlment have his will:
> The mightiest kings have had their minions—
> Great Alexander lov'd Hephestion;
> The conquering Hector for Hylas wept;
> And for Patroclus stern Achilles droop'd.
> And not kings only, but the wisest men—
> The Roman Tully lov'd Octavius;
> Grave Socrates, wild Alcibiades.
> Then let His Grace, whose youth is flexible
> And promiseth as much as we can wish,
> Freely enjoy that vain, light-headed earl,
> For riper years will wean him from such toys.
> [388–403]

But this appeal for tolerance, based on a wise man's knowledge of ancient history, falls on deaf ears. Young Mortimer replies:

Uncle, his wanton humor grieves not me.
But this I scorn, that one so basely born
Should by his sovereign's favor grow so pert
And riot it with the treasure of the realm
While soldiers mutiny for want of pay....
I have not seen a dapper Jack so brisk:
He wears a short Italian hooded cloak,
Larded with pearl, and in his Tuscan cap
A jewel of more value than the crown....
I will not yield to any such upstart!
[404–408, 414–417, 425]

Thus, the objection of the nobles is not that the young king has a favorite, but that this impertinent, base-born favorite has been given political powers over the nobles.

In the next scene we find young Spencer, a servant of the Earl of Gloucester, in conversation with Baldock, the tutor. He asks Spencer, now that the Earl is dead, which of the nobles will he serve? Spencer replies:

Not Mortimer, nor any of his side,
Because the King and he are enemies.
Baldock, learn this of me: a factious lord
Shall hardly do himself good, much less us;
But he that hath the favor of a king
May with one word advance us while we live.
The liberal Earl of Cornwall is the man
On whose good fortune Spencer's hope depends.
Baldock. What, mean you then to be his follower?
Y. Spencer. No, his companion, for he loves me well,
And would have once preferr'd me to the King.
[2.1.4–14]

The intimation here is that Spencer had been Gaveston's lover before the King made the young Frenchman his favorite. Here we see a microcosm of how politics are played and influenced by male lovers who form a clique or network of political power by bolstering one another. On the other hand, Mortimer, who has no sympathy for such sexual attachments, represents the heterosexual's view of power as imposed by heredity, force, and, in the end, tyranny.

Spencer then advises Baldock on how to gain favor with the nobles:

You must cast the scholar off
And learn to court it like a gentleman!
'Tis not a black coat and a little band,
A velvet-caped coat (faced before with serge),
And smelling to a nosegay all the day —
Or holding a napkin in your hand —
Or saying a long grace at a table's end —
Or making low legs to a nobleman —
Or looking downward with your eyelids close
And saying, "Truly, an't please your honor,"

Can get you any favor with great men.
You must be proud, bold, pleasant, resolute:
And now and then stab as occasion serves.
[31–43]

No doubt, that is how Marlowe, a mere cobbler's son, managed to deal with such men as Walsingham, Burghley, Raleigh, and others in the ruling class. He not only understood their psychology but how one advanced in a system dominated by heredity.

Meanwhile, the King's niece enters the scene showing great joy at having received a love letter from Gaveston, who tells her that he will be seeing her soon and that they will be married.

The scene at court is one of great expectations as Edward awaits the arrival of Gaveston. But when his favorite does arrive, he is mocked by the nobles. The scene then degenerates into a physical battle between Lancaster, Young Mortimer and Gaveston, in which the latter is wounded by Mortimer's sword. The King, furious, swears to make the nobles pay for their attempts to kill Gaveston.

Meanwhile, Young Mortimer has received news that his uncle has been taken prisoner by the Scots and requires a five-thousand-pound ransom to gain his release. Mortimer insists that the King pay the ransom since his uncle had gone to Scotland on a royal mission. The King tells Mortimer to pay the ransom himself with the help of others. "You shall have the broad seal to gather for him throughout the realm," says the King (2.2.147). "'Your minion Gaveston hath taught you this!" exclaims Lancaster (148). What follows is a long tirade by Lancaster and Mortimer describing the ruinous policies of the King. The King's brother tells Edward:

My lord, I see your love to Gaveston
Will be the ruin of the realm and you,
For now the wrathful nobles threaten wars.
And therefore, brother, banish him forever.
[208–211]

The King's reaction is to brand his brother a traitor. "Begone, whine thou with Mortimer!" To which Kent replies, "So will I, rather than with Gaveston."

In the next scene we find the Queen, the King's niece, Gaveston, Baldock and Young Spencer on stage. On the recommendation of his niece, the King adopts Baldock and Spencer as his servants. He speaks:

Cousin, this day shall be your marriage feast—
And, Gaveston, think that I love thee well,
To wed thee to our niece, the only heir
Unto the Earl of Gloucester late deceas'd....
Come, let's away! And when the marriage ends,
Have at the rebels and their complices!
[257–260, 265–266]

Meanwhile Kent has joined the rebellious nobles. They decide to attack the castle where the marriage has just taken place. Mortimer states:

> This tottered ensign of my ancestors,
> Which swept the desert shore of that Dead Sea
> Whereof we got the name of Mortimer,
> Will I advance upon this castle's walls.
> [2.3.22–25]

An interesting reference to the Crusades, wherein Mortimer's ancestors fought in the Holy Land and adopted the name Mortimer from the French mer de mort, Dead Sea. This is the kind of historic touch that makes us marvel at Marlowe's knowledge of history and how well he integrates it into a play.

Edward then urges Gaveston and his niece to escape:

> Fly, fly, my lords! The earls have got the hold.
> Take shipping and away to Scarborough.
> Spencer and I will post away by land.
> [2.4.4–6]

The King bids farewell to everyone except the Queen, who asks plaintively, "No farewell to poor Isabel thy Queen?" To which the King replies: "Yes, yes, for Mortimer your lover's sake!" The Queen responds: "Heaven can witness I love none but you!"

What follows is the pursuit of Gaveston and his capture by the nobles. They are about to hang him when the Earl of Arundel brings the nobles a message from the King.

> His Majesty,
> Hearing that you had taken Gaveston,
> Entreateth you by me, yet but he may
> See him before he dies. For why, he says,
> And sends you word, he knows that die he shall:
> And if you gratify His Grace so far
> He will be mindful of the courtesy.
> [2.5.36–42]

The nobles object, but the Earl of Pembroke, willing to gratify the King's request, undertakes to take Gaveston to the King and bring him back. "Upon my oath, I will return him back."

But, of course, something goes wrong. Pembroke leaves Gaveston overnight in the care of the Earl of Arundel who is attacked later that night by the Earl of Warwick, whose men take Gaveston and execute him.

Arundel brings the news of Gaveston's death to the King. He describes Warwick's treachery:

> Warwick in ambush lay
> And bare him [Gaveston] to his death: and in a trench
> Strake off his head—and march'd unto the camp.
> [3.2.121–123]

Young Spencer urges the King to avenge Gaveston's murder. And the King, fired up, agrees:

> By earth, the common mother of us all,
> By Heaven and all the moving orbs thereof,
> By this right hand, and by my father's sword,
> And all the honors 'longing to my crown,
> I will have heads and lives for him as many
> As I have manors, castles, towns, and towers! ...
> And in this place of honor and of trust,
> Spencer, sweet Spencer, I adopt thee here:
> And merely of our love we do create thee
> Earl of Gloucester and Lord Chamberlain,
> Despite of times, despite of enemies.
> [131–136, 146–150]

Now that Gaveston is gone, the nobles are ready to renew their loyalty to their king, provided he get rid of Spencer, whom they characterize as:

> ...A putrefying branch
> That deads the royal vine, whose golden leaves
> Empale your princely head, your diadem,
> Whose brightness such pernicious upstarts dim.
> [165–168]

To the nobles, maintaining royal-blood lines was of the greatest importance in securing and sustaining a stable and legitimate monarchy. Edward had violated that imperative with Gaveston and was now violating it with Spencer, who was a mere servant of the Earl of Gloucestor, now suddenly elevated to earldom by a young king throwing dynastic tradition to the winds. In England hereditary rights and privileges were the foundation of the royal system. Marlowe, who knew his place in the social scheme of things, had risen as far as one could go without royal blood or the connections of the landed gentry. His parents, though respectable, were at the bottom of the social ladder. But it was his genius and education at Cambridge that opened the door to the society of nobles. Obviously, he himself had no choice but to accept the society he lived in and to make the most of it.

But Edward refuses to get rid of Spencer:

> Rebels, will they appoint their sovereign
> His sports, his pleasures, and his company?
> [177–178]

The King declares war against the nobles, preferring, in Young Mortimer's words, to "bathe thy sword in subjects' blood, than banish that pernicious company."

Edward calls for civil war, and Warwick exclaims:

> A desperate and unnatural resolution!
> Alarum to the fight!
> St. George for England, and the barons' right!
> [220–222]

To which Edward replies: "Saint George for England, and King Edward's right" (223).

In the ensuing battle, Edward captures the barons, including Young Mortimer, Warwick and Lancaster. He has the latter two beheaded for murdering Gaveston, and Mortimer and the rest are sent to the Tower. The King, now triumphant, sends a messenger to France to inform the Queen and his son of his victory.

Meanwhile, Edmund (Earl of Kent), the King's brother, prepares to sail for France with Mortimer who has escaped from the Tower. He speaks:

> Fair blows the wind for France. Blow gentle gale,
> Til Edmund be arriv'd for England's good.
> Nature, yield to my country's cause in this.
> A brother? No, a butcher of thy friends!
> But I'll to France, and cheer the wronged Queen,
> And certify what Edward's looseness is.
> Unnatural King, to slaughter noblemen
> And cherish flatterers! Mortimer, I stay
> Thy sweet escape. Stand gracious, gloomy night,
> To his device!
>
> [4.1. 1–11]

In France, the Queen has been unsuccessful in gaining the help of her brother, the King. She is soothed by the young Prince Edward:

> Madam, return to England,
> And please my father well. And then a fig
> For all my uncle's friendship here in France.
> I warrant you, I'll win His Highness quickly.
> A loves me better than a thousand Spencers.
>
> [4.2. 4–8]

When Edmund and Mortiner arrive, the Queen is ecstatic with joy. With the help of Sir John of Hainault, they plan to return to England with an army.

Meanwhile, back in England, Edward and Young Spencer read a list of all the nobles who have been executed throughout the realm. They also set a reward on Mortimer's head. They are also informed that the Queen, Prince Edward, Edmund and Mortimer will soon be returning to England to wage war against them. The King responds:

> Ah, villains, hath that Mortimer escap'd?
> With him is Edmund gone associate?
> And will Sir John of Hainault lead the round?
> Welcome, a God's name, madam, and your son:
> England shall welcome you and all your rout! ...
> Ah, nothing grieves me but my little boy
> Is thus misled to countenance their ills.
>
> [4.3. 58–62, 68–69]

Back on English soil, the Queen, the Prince, Edmund, Mortimer, Sir John and soldiers prepare for battle. The Queen speaks:

Misgovern'd kings are cause of all this wreck.
And Edward, thou art one among them all
Whose looseness hath betray'd thy land to spoil
And made the channels overflow with blood
Of thine own people.
[4.4.9–13]

Knowing that they are about to be attacked by superior forces, the King, Spencer, and Baldock flee for their lives toward Ireland. When Edmund reaches the palace he finds them all gone. And he suddenly has a change of heart:

This way he fled, but I am come too late.
Edward, alas, my heart relents for thee!
Proud traitor, Mortimer, why dost thou chase
Thy lawful King, thy sovereign, with thy sword?
[4.5. 10–13]

After cursing himself for betraying his brother, he says:

Dissemble or thou diest, for Mortimer
And Isabel do kiss, while they conspire:
And yet she bears a face of love forsooth!
[21–23]

Thus, Edmund brings into the drama the illicit love affair between Mortimer and Isabel. There is so much in this play that reminds us of the sordid details of Queen Mary's love affair with Bothwell. The two were accomplices in the murder of the King of Scotland, Lord Darnley. Both Mary and Isabel were close to the French throne. Esme was French, and so was Gaveston. Obviously, Marlowe is telling us that history repeats itself.

After the Queen's army is victorious, Edmund asks how will she deal with the King. Mortimer answers:

My lord of Kent, what needs these questions?
'Tis not in her controlment, nor in ours.
But as the realm and parliament shall please:
So shall your brother be disposed of.
[43–46]

Young Spencer's father is taken prisoner. Mortimer orders him beheaded. But before the old man is led away, he says to Mortimer:

Rebel is he that fights against his prince!
So fought not they that fought in Edward's right.
[82–83]

Finally, the King, Spencer, and Baldock are captured before they can embark to Ireland. Marlowe gives us this touching scene between Edward, Spencer, and Baldock as they are separated.

K. Edw. Spencer, ah sweet Spencer, thus then must we part?
Y. Spen. We must, my lord! So will the angry heavens.

K. Edw. Nay, so will Hell and cruel Mortimer!
The gentle heavens have not to do in this.
Bald. My lord, it is in vain to grieve or storm.
Here humbly of Your Grace we take our leaves:
Our lots are cast, I fear me so is thine.
K. Edw. In Heaven we may, in earth ne'er shall we meet.
And, Leicester, say, what shall become of us?
Leics. Your Majesty must go to Killingworth.
K. Edw. Must! 'Tis somewhat hard when kings *must* go.
[73–83]

Marlowe conveys the political complexities and conflict in all of this so that the audience can recognize the difficulties Elizabeth's government faced in dealing with Mary Queen of Scots.

At Killingworth, Edward bemoans his dreadful state:

But when I call to mind I am a King,
Methinks I should revenge me of my wrongs,
That Mortimer and Isabel have done.
But what are kings when regiment is gone
But mere shadows in a sunshine day?
My nobles rule: I bear the name of King;
I wear the crown: but am controll'd by them —
By Mortimer and my unconstant Queen
Who spots my nuptial bed with infamy!
[5.1.23–31]

A line so remindful of the "incestuous sheets" in Hamlet.

The Bishop of Winchester then requests Edward to give up his crown to his son, Prince Edward. The King argues that it is ambitious Mortimer who wants the crown. But the Bishop insists that it is for the young Prince. In a highly emotional scene that must have gripped the audience, Edward takes off the crown and then puts it on again. He yells:

Inhuman creatures nurs'd with tiger's milk,
Why gape you for your sovereign's overthrow.
[71–72]

We can imagine how Edward Alleyn made the most of these lines and others in this scene! There can be no doubt that the audience was torn between sympathy for the King and disdain for his actions that led to his downfall. The King is finally convinced to give up his crown, for if he refuses to do so, his son would lose his right to the throne. "Commend me to my son," he says, "and bid him rule better than I."

Once he has given up the crown, Edward's fate is sealed. Mortimer replaces Leicester, the King's sympathetic jailer, with Berkeley, his own man. And now that they have disposed of all of Edward's allies, they must decide what to do with Edward. With the Prince on the throne and Mortimer as his regent, the latter and Isabel will now rule the realm. But both realize that as long as Edward

lives, they can never be sure of their power. They are also aware that Edward's brother, Edmund, the Earl of Kent, is engaged in a plot to set his brother free. Thus, Isabel speaks:

> But, Mortimer, as long as he survives,
> What safety rests for us or for my son?
> *Y. Mor.* Speak, shall he presently be despatch'd and die?
> *Q. Isab.* I would he were, so 'twere not by my means!
> [5.2. 43–46]

The audience certainly saw this scene as a virtual reenactment of what Mary Queen of Scots and Bothwell must have said when they agreed to get rid of Darnley. Elizabeth had justified the imprisonment of Mary on the basis of that suspected murder plot.

Mortimer engages Matrevis and Gurney to replace Berkeley as the King's guardian. He gives them instructions:

> As thou intend'st to rise by Mortimer—
> Who now makes Fortune's wheel turn as he please!—
> Seek all the means thou canst to make him droop,
> And neither give him kind word nor good look.
> And this above the rest. Because we hear
> That Edmund casts to work his liberty,
> Remove him still from place to place by night
> And at the last come to Killingworth—
> And then from thence to Berkeley back again!
> [55–64]

As the men are about to leave, the Queen steps forward and gives them a jewel to take to the King:

> Commend me humbly to His Majesty,
> And tell him that I labor all in vain
> To ease his grief and work his liberty.
> And bear him this as witness of my love.
> [72–75]

The men leave, and Mortimer turns to Isabel:

> Finely dissembled! Do so still, sweet Queen.
> Here comes the young Prince with the Earl of Kent.
> *Q. Isab.* Something he whispers in his childish ears.
> *Y. Mor.* If he have such access unto the Prince,
> Our plots and strategems will soon be dash'd.
> *Q. Isab.* Use Edmund friendly as if all were well.
> [77–82]

Marlowe creates suspense, intrigue and conflict in virtually every scene of the play. His ingenuity as a playwright is boundless! He has transformed Mortimer and Isabel into prime villains. Note Mortimer's reference to the Wheel of Fortune, a device Marlowe uses to characterize the climb to power.

In the next scene Mortimer and Edmund engage in mortal conflict over the fate of Edward and who will rightfully succeed him. The action reveals the deftness with which Marlowe is able to create in a short scene intense conflict between all of the major characters. It begins quietly:

Y. Mor. How fares my honorable lord of Kent?
Kent. In health, sweet Mortimer. How fares Your Grace?
Q. Isab. Well, if my lord your brother were enlarg'd.
Kent. I hear of late he hath depos'd himself.
Q. Isab. The more my grief.
Y. Mor. And mine.
Kent. (Ah, they do dissemble!) [Aside.]
Q. Isab. Sweet son, come hither, I must talk with thee.
Y. Mor. Thou being his uncle and the next of blood,
Do look to be protector over the Prince?
Kent. Not I, my lord. Who should protect the son
But she that gave him life? I mean the Queen.
P. Edw. Mother, persuade me not to wear the crown.
Let him be King! I am too young to reign.
Q. Isab. But be content, seeing it is His Highness' pleasure.
P. Edw. Let me see him first, and then I will.
Kent. Ay, do, sweet nephew!
Q. Isab. Brother, you know it is impossible.
P. Edw. Why, is he dead?
Q. Isab. No, God forbid!
Kent. I would those words proceeded from your heart!
Y. Mor. Inconstant Edmund, dost thou favor him
That wast a cause of his imprisonment?
Kent. The more cause have I now to make amends!
Y. Mor. I tell thee, 'tis not meet that one so false
Should come about the person of a Prince.
My lord, he hath betrayed the King his brother,
And therefore trust him not.
P. Edw. But he repents and sorrows for it now.
Q. Isab. Come son, and go with this gentle lord and me.
P. Edw. With you I will, but not with Mortimer.
Y. Mor. Why, youngling, 'sdainst thou so of Mortimer?
Then I will carry thee by force away.
P. Edw. Help, uncle Kent! Mortimer will wrong me!

[*Mortimer grasps the Prince. Kent tries to intervene.*]

Q. Isab. Brother Edmund, strive not. We are his friends.
Isabel is nearer than the Earl of Kent.
Kent. Sister, Edward is my charge, redeem him.
Q. Isab. Edward is my son, and I will keep him.
Kent. [Aside.] (Mortimer shall know that he hath wrong'd me.
Hence will I haste to Killingworth Castle
And rescue aged Edward from his foes
To be reveng'd on Mortimer and thee!)
[83–124]

The scene shifts to the dungeon in the castle where Edward is being held. Matrevis and Gurney, Mortimer's men, shave the King and wash his face in puddle water. Edmund arrives to free his brother but is thwarted by Matrevis and Gurney who have him arrested and taken to Mortimer. Meanwhile, the two men take the King to Killingworth where he will meet his end.

We then see Mortimer alone, weighing his predicament. He speaks:

> The King must die, or Mortimer goes down.
> The commons now begin to pity him,
> Yet he that is the cause of Edward's death,
> Is sure to pay for it when his son is of age;
> And therefore will I do it cunningly.
> [5.4.1–5]

Mortimer concocts a scheme whereby it will appear that Matrevis and others will bear the blame of the King's death. Mortimer calls in Lighthorn, a professional assassin who will do the job of killing Edward. Lighthorn is proud of his professionalism. He tells Mortimer:

> You shall not need to give instructions.
> 'Tis not the first time I have kill'd a man:
> I learn'd in Naples how to poison flowers,
> To strangle with a lawn thrust through the throat,
> To pierce the windpipe with a needle's point,
> Or whilst one is asleep, to take a quill
> And blow a little powder in his ears,
> Or open his mouth and pour quicksilver down.
> And yet I have a braver way than these.
> *Y. Mor.* What's that?
> *Light.* Nay, you shall pardon me. None shall know my tricks.
> [29–39]

Note that Marlowe used the poisoned flowers in *The Jew of Malta* and that the blowing of poison in the ears of a sleeping individual is the means that Hamlet's uncle used to kill his father, the King.

Mortimer now revels in his power:

> The Prince I rule, the Queen do I command,
> And with a lowly conge to the ground
> The proudest lords salute me as I pass.
> I seal, I cancel, I do what I will.
> Fear'd am I more than lov'd — let me be fear'd
> And when I frown make all the court look pale....
> Now is all sure. The Queen and Mortimer
> Shall rule the realm, the King; and none rule us.
> Mine enemies will I plague, my friends advance.
> [48–53, 65–67]

The young prince is then crowned King. After which Edmund is brought before Mortimer, the Queen, and the new young King. Mortimer orders Edmund

to be beheaded. But the young King wants Edmund, his uncle, to live. Edmund struggles with the soldiers and the young King argues with Mortimer. But Mortimer prevails and Edmund is taken away to be beheaded, after which the young King says, pointing to Mortimer:

> What safety may I look for at his hands
> If that my uncle shall be murder'd thus?
> Q. *Isab.* Fear not, sweet boy, I'll guard thee from thy foes.
> Had Edmund liv'd, he would have sought thy death.
> Come, son, we'll ride a-hunting in the park.
> [110–114]

The scene shifts to the dungeon where the King is being kept "in a vault up to the knees in water to which the channels of the castle run." Matrevis and Gurney have done all in their power to make the King as miserable as possible. But then Lightborn enters and, in the name of Mortimer, takes custody of Edward. He tells the two men to "see that in the next room I have a fire, and get me a spit and let it be red-hot." He also wants a table and a feather-bed.

What follows is one of the most bizarre murder scenes in all of English drama. The conversation between the sadistic murderer and his royal victim must have held the audience in hushed states of pity and dread. This was Marlowe at his psychological best.

After the King is killed, Lightborn asks Matrevis and Gurney, "Tell me, sirs, was it not bravely done?" To which Gurney replies: "Excellent well! Take this for thy reward!" and he stabs Lightborn to death.

Matrevis returns to Mortimer to bring news of the King's death. Gurney has fled, and Matrevis is afraid that he will betray them, which he does with a letter to the young King. The Queen informs Mortimer of this turn of events. "The King my son hath news His father's dead, and we have murder'd him.... Now, Mortimer, begins our tragedy."

The young King orders Mortimer to be executed. The Queen implores her son to pity Mortimer and spare his life. But Mortimer tells the Queen that he would rather die than "sue for life unto a paltry boy." He says:

> Base Fortune, now I see, that in thy wheel
> There is a point, to which when men aspire,
> They tumble headlong down. That point I touch'd,
> And seeing there was no place to mount up higher,
> Why should I grieve at my declining fall?
> Farewell, fair Queen, weep not for Mortimer,
> That scorns the world, and as a traveller
> Goes to discover countries yet unknown.
> [5.6.59–66]

Note Marlowe's reference to the Wheel of Fortune, a symbol for unbridled ambition that often leads to death, as in the case of Northumberland. Also, the idea of death leading to "countries yet unknown" reminds us of Hamlet.

The young King then orders his mother to be committed to the Tower and stand trial as an accomplice in the murder of her husband. All of this brings to mind the trial and execution of Mary Queen of Scots.

One can only marvel at how Marlowe was able to weave contemporary politics and exquisite free-verse dialogue in a drama that is as exciting to read today as it was when it was first performed.

24

Henry VI, Part One

It makes no sense to believe that the unknown country bumpkin, William Shakespeare, started his career as a dramatist by writing three ingeniously conceived plays about the War of the Roses. The subject matter alone, with so many historical characters and events, would have been daunting enough for an experienced writer let alone a novice with no known education emerging from out of nowhere.

Were it not for the mistaken belief that Greene's "Shake-scene" referred to an unknown writer named Shakespeare instead of the well-known actor Edward Alleyne, the notion that these plays could be written by a novice would be totally untenable. The plays were written between 1589 and 1590 when Shakespeare was a nonentity.

In writing these great historical plays, Marlowe drew his information from two sources available at the time: Edward Hall's *The Union of two noble and illustrious families York and Lancaster* and Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland.* The second edition of Holinshed was published in 1587. But Marlowe may have had access at Cambridge to the first edition published in 1578. The earliest editions of Hall's book go back to the 1540's and 50's. And so, Marlowe, as a student, would have been able to absorb all of this history, providing him with more than enough material for his dramas to come.

In order to establish that *Henry VI, Part One,* was written by Marlowe, it is essential to maintain a precise chronology of events. We know from Henslowe's Diary that *Henry VI, Part One,* was first performed at the Rose Theatre on March 3, 1591, by Lord Strange's Men who performed other plays by Marlowe. Shakespeare had no connection with Lord Strange's Men or with Pembroke's Men. This was two years before Marlowe's alleged demise, two years before the name Shakespeare appeared on any work of literature — *Venus and Adonis,* in 1593 — six years before his name appeared on the publication of a play, *Love's Labors Lost,* in 1598.

Henslowe did not name the author of *Henry VI,* since it was not his habit to name the authors of plays he listed, but only to give their dates of performance and receipts. *Henry VI, Part One,* was performed during the same period

in which Marlowe's other plays were being staged. From 1591 to 1597, *Henry VI, Part One,* was performed sixteen times. Its first performance earned Henslowe more than three pounds. Thus, it was not only a popular play, but a very profitable one as well.

Thomas Nashe, a close friend of Marlowe's, referred to *Henry VI* in his book, *Pierce Penilesse,* published in August 1592. In a section of the book in which he praises play-going as a virtue, he wrote (pp. 86–87):

> Nay, what if I prove plays to be no extreme, but a rare exercise of virtue? First, for the subject of them: for the most part it is borrowed out of our English chronicles, wherein our forefathers' valiant acts, that have lien long buried in rusty brass and wormeaten books, are revived, and they themselves raised from the grave of oblivion and brought to plead their aged honours in open presence, than which what can be a sharper reproof to these degenerate effeminate days of ours?
>
> How would it have joyed brave Talbot, the terror of the French, to think that after he had lien two hundred years in his tomb he should triumph again on the stage, and have his bones new-embalmed with the tears of ten thousand spectators at least, at several times, who in the tragedian that represents his person imagine they behold him fresh bleeding!

Since *Pierce Penilesse* was published before Marlowe's alleged death in 1593, we can safely assume that Marlowe was in agreement with Nashe and viewed play-writing as a means of educating the public as well as entertaining it. The full title of Nashe's book is *Pierce Penilesse his Supplication to the Divell. Describing the over-spreading of Vice, and Suppression of Vertue,* published by The Bodley Head Ltd, 1924.

Henry VI, Part One was not known as a play written by Shakespeare until it appeared in print for the first time in the First Folio of 1623. The prime mover behind the First Folio was the publisher Edward Blount who had known Marlowe, his patron Sir Thomas Walsingham, the latter's wife, Lady Audrey Walsingham, and the actor William Shakespeare. In other words, Blount's life spanned the years in which the entire conspiracy took place and he knew all of the principals involved.

Blount had published Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* in 1598 with a glowing tribute to the presumably dead author. Obviously, he was in a position to know the true author of the plays he assembled for the First Folio. He did not include any of the many plays that bore Shakespeare's name but were not Marlowe's. He also knew where to find the twenty plays that had never been published, some of which had never even been staged. How did he know they existed and were all written by the same person?

Had Blount and Walsingham not been alive in 1623, there would never have been a First Folio. Up until that time, only nine of the thirty-six plays that ended up in the First Folio bore the name of Shakespeare in their earlier quarto publications. *Henry VI, Part One,* had not been published before 1623. So how did Blount know it belonged in the First Folio? Edward Alleyn, who was still alive in 1623, would certainly have known who the author was. He might even have

been privy to the conspiracy. Henslowe died in 1616, the same year in which Shakespeare died. Nashe was dead in 1601. Richard Burbage was dead in 1619. Greene had died in 1592.

And because Blount and his colleagues decided to put Shakespeare's name on the First Folio, the public has had nothing but distortions and inventions from scholars concerning Shakespeare's life as a writer. *Henry VI, Part One,* is of particular importance to scholars because most of them believe it to be Shakespeare's first play. A. L. Rowse, who built a career writing about the Bard from Stratford, writes in *The Annotated Shakespeare* (p. 756):

> This is almost certainly Shakespeare's first play.... The dominant influence observable again and again in *Henry VI* is Marlowe's. He had patented this grandiloquent poetic diction, in splendid black verse, in *Tamburlaine.* ... Marlowe was the senior, the initiator, the leader; but the influence was not all one way. Before he died, so lamentably, he [Marlowe] copies from *Henry VI* and wrote his *Edward II.*

Of course, if you didn't believe that Marlowe was the author of both plays, you might indeed come up with the absurdity that Marlowe, who had already written so many great plays, had to copy from the work of a novice in order to write another great dramatic masterpiece, *Edward II.* The reason there is so much Marlowe in *Henry VI* is because he wrote it.

Tucker Brooke, in the Yale edition of *The First Part of King Henry the Sixth,* comments on the various views held by scholars on the authorship of the play. There were those who argued that Shakespeare had no part in writing the play; those who believed that Shakespeare had indeed written the entire play; and finally those who believed that the play was written by Shakespeare in collaboration with others, notably Marlowe, Greene, and perhaps Peele. Brooke writes:

> Fleay gives precise, but highly dubious details (*Life and Work of Shakespeare, 1886*): About 1588–9 Marlowe plotted, and, in conjunction with Kyd (or Greene), Peele, and Lodge, wrote *I Henry VI* for the Queen's Men. ... In 1591–2 the Queen's Men were in distress and sold, among other plays, *I Henry VI* to Lord Strange's Men, who produced it in 1592....

Brooke also listed fifteen Marlowe "echoes"—or lines in the play that were close to lines in Marlowe's plays, much like the parallelisms that Calvin Hoffman quoted in his book, *The Murder of the Man Who Was Shakespeare.*

And so, virtually all of the Shakespeare scholars admit that there is an awful lot of Marlowe in *Henry VI, Part One.* We have already quoted Harold Bloom in Chapter 16, in which he notes the "mode and rhetoric" of Marlowe throughout the play. The great scholar also wrote:

> Change the names of the monarchs, substitute Scythia for England, and you would have passable Marlowe. Robert Greene was incapable of that good a Marlovian imitation, and George Peele shied away from too overt tracking of Marlowe [*Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human,* p. 44].

If, as it has been asserted, that Marlowe wrote the Henry VI trilogy between 1589 and 1590, then it was something of a departure from his previous plays

which were centered around a strong main character: Tamburlaine, Barabas, Faustus. In Part One, Henry VI is too young to be the center of the drama. Great historical characters such as Lord Talbot and Joan of Arc march across the stage as if to give the audience lessons in history.

All of which suggests that Marlowe wrote these plays under the strong influence of the wealthy Countess of Pembroke whose ideas about drama were taken from the French playwright Robert Garnier (1545–1590). Garnier wrote historical plays based on a Senecan model, although as a Christian, he differed greatly from the pagan Roman playwright.

After the death of her brother Philip, Mary Sidney, the Countess of Pembroke, took upon herself to advance Philip's ideas about reforming English drama. She became the center and patroness of a group of writers including Edward Dyer, Edmund Spenser, Fulke Greville, and some younger poets, notably Samuel Daniel who became her protégé and wrote his own version of the War of the Roses. She also persuaded her husband to form Pembroke's Men, which performed many of Marlowe's plays. The group dissolved in 1593, probably because of Marlowe's departure from the scene. David Riggs writes in *The World of Christopher Marlowe* (p. 282):

> The little we know about Pembroke's Men mainly derives from the remarkable group of texts that were sold to the printers when the company broke up.... According to the title pages of four plays published in 1593–94, the company's repertory included Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus, The True Tragedy of Richard, Duke of York* and *The Taming of a Shrew,* along with Marlowe's *Edward II.* The *True Tragedy* and *The Shrew* were adaptations of Shakespeare's *3 Henry VI* and *The Taming of the Shrew. The Contention between the Houses of York and Lancaster,* an adaptation of Shakespeare's *2 Henry VI,* almost certainly belonged to Pembroke's Men as well.

It is easy to see how an astute biographer like David Riggs, who uncritically accepts "Shake-scene" as Shakespeare, has no choice but to distort history in order to make the square peg fit into the round hole. His assertions that Shakespeare wrote *Titus Andronicus,* the *Henry VI* trilogy, and *The Taming of the Shrew* are not based on fact but on the false Shake-scene premise. The *Titus Andronicus* Quarto does not have Shakespeare's name on it. *The Taming of the Shrew* Quarto was published in 1631, eight years after the play's first publication in the First Folio. The three *Henry VI* plays were not published in their present forms until they appeared in the First Folio. By accepting a false premise, historians and biographers can make a mess of the truth.

Henry VI, Part One has all of the earmarks of a Marlowe work: the expert use of dialogue to convey intense conflict, poetic ingenuity, and an astute knowledge of history. There is no record of its having been published as a Quarto. How it finally wound up in the First Folio thirty-two years later is a tribute to the diligence of Edward Blount.

The play opens at the funeral of Henry V at Westminster Abbey. In attendance are the Duke of Bedford (Regent of France), Duke of Gloucester (Protector), Duke

of Exeter, Earl of Warwick, the Bishop of Winchester, and Duke of Somerset. They all sing praises to the late king, reminiscent of Tamburlaine. But Marlowe quickly turns the scene into one of conflict. The Bishop states:

> He was a king bless'd of the King of Kings...
> The battles of the Lord of Hosts he fought;
> The church's prayers made him so prosperous.
> *Gloucester.* The church? Where is it? Had not churchmen pray'd,
> His thread of life had not so soon decay'd.
> None do you like but an effeminate prince
> Whom like a schoolboy you may overawe.
> *Winchester.* Gloucester, whate'er we like, thou are Protector
> And lookest to command the prince and realm.
> Thy wife is proud. She holdeth thee in awe
> More than God or religious churchmen may.
> *Gloucester.* Name not religion, for thou lov'st the flesh.
> [1.1. 28, 31–41]

Bedford intervenes, "Cease, cease these jars, and rest your minds in peace." He hopes to quell these "civil broils" before they do great damage to the state.

A messenger then brings bad news from France. The English have been driven out of seven cities. The cause? Want of men, money, and disputing among the generals. A second messenger brings further bad news: the Dauphin Charles has been crowned king in Rheims and has gathered around him a group of confederates: the Bastard of Orleans, Reignier, the Duke of Anjou, and the Duke of Alencon. A third messenger brings additional bad news: Lord Talbot has been captured by the enemy after a ferocious fight. Meanwhile, Orleans is besieged, and the English army, weakened and faint, needs fresh supplies. The nobles prepare to go to France, while Winchester plots to take control of the young king when the nobles are away.

The next scene takes us to France to the Dauphin's camp before Orleans. They comment on the weakness of the English, but are beaten back by them. The Dauphin is furious. The Bastard of Orleans arrives and tells the Dauphin that he brings with him "a holy maid," Joan Pucelle. The maid speaks to the Dauphin:

> Dauphin, I am by birth a shepherd's daughter,
> My wit untrain'd in any kind of art....
> God's mother deigned to appear to me,
> And in a vision full of majesty
> Will'd me to leave my base vocation
> And free my country from calamity;
> Her aid she promis'd and assur'd success....
> Ask me what question thou canst possible,
> And I will answer unpremeditated.
> My courage try by combat, if thou dar'st
> And thou shalt find that I exceed my sex.
> Resolve on this: thou shalt be fortunate
> If thou receive me for thy warlike mate.
> [1.2. 72–73, 78–82, 87–92]

The Dauphin is impressed. After a test of strength, in which Joan defeats the Dauphin, he exclaims, "Thou art an Amazon and fightest with the sword of Deborah."

Joan then vows to raise the English siege against Orleans. Reignier speaks: "Woman, do what thou canst to save our honours. Drive them from Orleans and be immortaliz'd."

The scene then shifts to London where Gloucester is trying to enter the Tower but is denied by Cardinal Winchester's men. But when Gloucester threatens to burst the gates open, he is finally let in. What ensues is hot verbal exchange between Gloucester and the Cardinal, which results in violence. The Mayor finally arrives to separate the two forces. However, he cannot stop the two antagonists from threatening each other.

The scene then shifts back to France, to Orleans, where the English are ready to defend their position. Talbot enters, having been exchanged for a French prisoner, arranged by Bedford. He speaks with Salisbury, the veteran warrior, who taught King Henry V how to win wars, describing how he was treated as a prisoner. The French begin their attack, and Salisbury is mortally wounded. Talbot vows revenge. However, his army is in retreat. "A woman clad in armour chaseth them," he says.

Talbot then briefly encounters Joan. He is determined to "chastise this high-minded strumpet." But Joan is too busy to stop and fight. "Thy hour is not yet come," she tells him. "I must go victual Orleans forthwith. O'ertake me if thou canst! I scorn thy strength. ... This day is ours, as many more shall be."

In Scene 6, the French exult in their victory in Orleans. The Dauphin speaks:

> 'Tis Joan, not we, by whom this day is won;
> For which I will divide my crown with her...
> No longer on Saint Denis will we cry,
> But Joan la Pucelle shall be France's saint.
> [1.6. 17–18, 28–29]

In Act 2 the English, led by Talbot, retake Orleans by finding a weak point in the French defense and scaling the wall. The French, taken by surprise, blame Joan for giving them a false sense of security. She sets forth a new strategy:

> Question, my lords, no further of the case,
> How or which way. 'Tis sure they found some place
> But weakly guarded, where the breach was made.
> And now there rests no other shift but this—
> To gather our soldiers, scatter'd and dispers'd,
> And lay new platforms to endamage them.
> [2.1. 72–77]

In the next scene a messenger brings an invitation to Talbot to visit the Countess of Auvergne at her castle so "that she may boast she hath beheld the man whose glory fills the world with loud report." Talbot accepts the invitation. Of course the Countess is plotting to kill Talbot once she takes him prisoner. But Talbot outwits her by having his soldiers surround the castle and entering

it on cue. When the Countess realizes that the game is up, she invites Talbot to stay. "With all my heart, and think me honoured to feast so great a warrior in my house."

The next scene takes us to London, to the garden at Temple Hall, where a verbal duel is going on between Richard Plantagenet and Somerset, witnessed by Warwick, Earl of Suffolk, Vernon, and others. The dispute is over who is telling the truth. Somerset asks Warwick to judge between them, but Warwick claims to be "no wiser than a daw [a stupid bird]." Richard then suggests that those who believe him pluck a white rose off the brier, while Somerset plucks a red rose. Most of the onlookers pluck white roses, which causes Richard to comment, "Hath not thy rose a canker, Somerset?" To which Somerset replies, "Hath not thy rose a thorn, Plantagenet?" But the crux of the duel is revealed in the following exchange:

> *Somerset.* By him that made me, I'll maintain my words
> On any plot of ground in Christendom!
> Was not thy father, Richard Earl of Cambridge,
> For treason executed in our late king's days?
> And by his treason stand'st not thou attainted,
> Corrupted, and exempt from ancient gentry?
> His trespass yet lives guilty in thy blood,
> And till thou be restor'd thou art a yeoman.
> *Richard.* My father was attached, not attainted;
> Condemn'd to die for treason, but no traitor;
> And that I'll prove on better men than Somerset,
> Were growing time once ripened to my will....
> *Somerset.* Ah, thou shalt find us ready for thee still;
> And know us by these colours as thy foes,
> For these my friends in spite of thee shall wear.
> *Richard.* And, by my soul, this pale and angry rose,
> As cognizance of my blood-drinking hate,
> Will I for ever, and my faction, wear
> Until it wither with me to my grave
> Or flourish to the height of my degree....
> *Warwick.* And here I prophesy: this brawl to-day
> Grown to this faction in the Temple Garden
> Shall send, between Red Rose and the White
> A thousand souls to death and deadly night.
> [2.4. 88–99, 104–111, 124–127]

Thus began the War of the Roses, which did not end until the time of Blackheath Field, in 1497.

The next scene takes place in the Tower of London where Richard Plantagenet has gone to visit his aging uncle Mortimer who has been a prisoner there for many years. He asks the aged man why his father, Earl of Cambridge, was beheaded. Mortimer, who was once a legitimate heir to the throne, tells a long complicated tale of family intrigue, rivalry, and royal ambition, at the end of which Richard concludes that his father's execution "was nothing less than

bloody tyranny." Mortimer dies in Richard's arms, and Richard vows to redeem his name.

The Third Act opens at the Parliament House with the King, Exeter, Gloucester, Winchester, Suffolk, Richard Plantagenet attending. The scene opens with Winchester and Gloucester engaged in heated argument. Finally, the young King speaks:

> Uncles of Gloucester and of Winchester,
> The special watchmen of our English weal,
> I would prevail, if prayers might prevail,
> To join your hearts in love and amity.
> O, what a scandal is it to our crown
> That two such noble peers as ye should jar!
> Believe me, lords, my tender years can tell
> Civil dissension is a viperous worm
> That gnaws the bowels of the commonwealth.
> [3.1.65–73]

But it takes the Mayor to stop the fighting between the two men's factions outside the Parliament. After much pleading by the King, the two men reluctantly decide to be as friends. The King is overjoyed. His next bit of business regards Richard Plantagenet of which the King says, "Our pleasure is that Richard be restored to his blood." To this Winchester agrees. The King speaks to Richard:

> Stoop then and set your knee against my foot,
> And in reguerdon of that duty done
> I girt thee with the valiant sword of York.
> Rise, Richard, like a true Plantagenet,
> And rise created princely Duke of York.
> [3.1. 168–172]

And while all are congratulating Richard, Somerset, seething with hate and resentment, in an aside says menacingly: "Perish, base prince, ignoble Duke of York!" Meanwhile, the King and his men prepare to sail to France. But Exeter expresses fear of the future. Alone, he says:

> Ay, we may march in England or in France,
> Not seeing what is likely to ensue.
> This late dissension grown betwixt the peers
> Burns under feigned ashes of forg'd love
> And will at last break out into a flame.
> As fest'red members rot but by degree
> Till bones and flesh and sinews fall away,
> So will this base and envious discord breed....
> Which is so plain that Exeter doth wish
> His days may finish ere that hapless time.
> [3.1. 186–193, 199–200]

Scene 2 takes us to France, before Rouen, where we find Joan Pucelle disguised with four soldiers with sacks on their backs. Joan's plan is for them to

enter the city as poor market folk seeking to sell their corn. They succeed in gaining entry. Joan then, using a torch in a tower, signals to the French forces where they may enter the city. As the French enter, they encounter Talbot, Burgundy, and Bedford, who is wounded. Talbot curses Joan, "that witch, that damned sorceress." He dares Alencon, "Dare ye come forth and meet us on the field?" Alencon declines the invitation.

Sir John Fastolfe and a Captain enter the scene, which provides the audience with a bit of comic relief.

> *Captain.* Whither away, Sir John Fastolfe, in such haste?
> *Fastolfe.* Whither away? To save myself by flight.
> We are like to have the overthrow again.
> *Captain.* What? Will you fly, and leave Lord Talbot?
> *Fastolfe.* Ay! All the Talbots in the world, to save my life.
> *Captain.* Cowardly knight, ill fortune follow thee!
> [3.2. 104–109]

The coward in battle is always a source of humor on the stage. Meanwhile, Joan, Alencon and Charles also flee. Despite their setback, they continue to have faith in Joan's ability to lead them to victory.

Joan decides to entice the Duke of Burgundy away from Talbot. A parley is arranged whereby Joan will be able to speak with the Duke in private. She speaks to him with passion, appealing to his French patriotism. When she is done, he says to himself:

> I am vanquished! These haughty words of hers
> Have batt'red me like roaring cannon-shot
> And made me almost yield my knees....
> My forces and my power of men are yours.
> So farewell, Talbot! I'll no longer trust thee.
> [3.3. 78–84]

Scene 4 takes us to the Palace in Paris where we find Henry, Gloucester, Winchester, Richard Duke of York, Suffolk, Somerset, Warwick, Exeter, Vernon, Basset, and Talbot. Talbot reports of their military successes, having recaptured fifty fortresses, twelve cities, and seven walled towns. The King, having heard about Talbot from his father, and now meeting him for the first time, knights him, making him Earl of Shrewsbury. Everyone exits the stage except Vernon and Basset. Vernon, a follower of the Duke of York, and Basset, a follower of Somerset, get into a vicious argument in which Vernon strikes Basset. Basset vows to take the matter up with the King.

In Act Four, Henry is crowned King Henry VI in the Palace in Paris. After the Governor of Paris takes his oath of loyalty to the English king, Fastolfe enters carrying a letter from the Duck of Burgundy. Talbot takes this opportunity to berate Fastolfe and strip him of his knighthood for his cowardice. The King then banishes Fastolfe.

Gloucester then reads the letter from Burgundy in which the Duke states that he has switched his allegiance to Charles, "the rightful King of France." The

King sends Talbot to show Burgundy "how ill we brook his treason." Vernon and Basset then enter begging the King to grant them combat over insults made between Somerset and York concerning the character of their respective roses. The King is annoyed beyond measure, but the two men will not be reconciled. Gloucester speaks:

> Presumptuous vassals, are you not asham'd
> With this immodest clamorous outrage
> To trouble and disturb the King and us?
> [4.1. 125–127]

To which the King adds:

> Come thither you that would be combatants....
> Remember where we are,
> In France, amongst a fickle wavering nation.
> If they perceive dissension in our looks
> And that within ourselves we disagree,
> How will their grudging stomachs be provok'd
> To wilful disobedience, and rebel! ...
> Cousin of York, we institute your Grace
> To be our Regent in these parts of France;
> And, good my Lord of Somerset, unite
> Your troops of horsemen with his bands of foot;
> And like true subjects, sons of your progenitors,
> Go cheerfully together and digest
> Your angry choler on your enemies.
> [134–147, 162–168]

The scene ends with Exeter alone on stage mulling over the situation:

> ...No simple man that sees
> This jarring discord of nobility,
> This shouldering of each other in the court,
> This factious bandying of their favourites,
> But that it doth presage some ill event.
> 'Tis much when sceptres are in children's hands,
> But more when envy breeds unkind division.
> There comes the ruin, there begins confusion.
> [187–194]

In Act 4, Scene 2, we find Talbot before Bordeaux urging the General of the French to surrender the city and thereby avoid bloodshed. But he rejects the offer, informing Talbot that the Dauphin's forces are strong enough to defeat him.

Meanwhile, York and his troops, in the Plains of Gascony, are informed by a messenger that the Dauphin's army is headed toward Bordeaux to fight Talbot. But York cannot move to help Talbot because Somerset has not provided the promised supply of horsemen. Without that aid, Talbot, who has been joined by his son, are doomed. Sir William Lacy enters the scene and urges York to go

to Talbot's aid. But York realizes that to do so without Somerset's horsemen would lead to defeat.

The scene then shifts to elsewhere in Gascony where Somerset and his men are gathered. One of Talbot's captains is with him.

> *Somerset.* It is too late; I cannot send them now.
> This expedition was by York and Talbot
> Too rashly plotted.... The over-daring Talbot
> Hath sullied all his gloss of former honour
> By this unheedful, desperate, wild adventure.
> York set him on to fight, and die in shame,
> That, Talbot dead, great York might bear the name.
> [4.4. 1–11]

Sir William Lacy enters and chastises Somerset for not joining forces with York. But Somerset insists that the disaster is all York's fault.

Scene Five takes us to the English camp near Bordeaux. Talbot and his son John engage in a moving father-son dialogue, somewhat similar to an operatic recitative with rhyming lines. Here are several:

> *Talbot.* Shall all thy mother's hopes lie in one tomb?
> *John.* Ay, rather than I'll shame my mother's womb.
> *Talbot.* Upon my blessing I command thee go.
> *John.* To fight I will, but not to fly the foe.
> *Talbot.* Part of thy father may be sav'd in thee.
> *John.* No part of him but will be shame in me.
> *Talbot.* Thou never hadst renown, nor canst not lose it.
> *John.* Yes, your renowned name. Shall flight abuse it?
> [4.5. 34–41]

Only a superb poet could have written such moving dialogue, which must have been an actor's dream.

Scene 6 takes place on the field of battle, with Talbot and son once more engaging in eloquent rhyming dialogue discussing whether to fly from the scene or die in battle. The son dies first, and Talbot dies soon after.

The French enter the scene and Charles comments on the defeat of Talbot: "Had York and Somerset brought rescue in, We should have found a bloody day of this." Sir William Lucy enters and takes possession of the bodies from the scornful French. The death of Talbot emboldens Charles and Joan to march on Paris. "All will be ours, now bloody Talbot's slain," exults Charles.

Act Five takes us to the Palace in London where the King, Gloucester, and Exeter are present. The King has received letters from the Pope, the Emperor, and the Earl of Armangnac urging him to end the wars between two Christian nations. In order to facilitate peace, Armangnac offers his daughter's hand in marriage to King Henry "with a large and sumptuous dowry." The King professes that he is too young for marriage, but will do whatever is best for his country.

At this point, Winchester, in Cardinal's habit, enters with three ambassa-

dors, including a Papal Legate. Exeter recalls to himself what Henry V had told him: "If once he come to be a cardinal, He'll make his cap coequal with the Crown."

The King then directs the ambassadors and Winchester to go to France to make arrangements for the marriage. All leave the stage, except Winchester and the Legate.

> *Winchester.* Stay, my Lord Legate. You shall first receive
> The sum of money which I promised
> Should be delivered to his Holiness
> For clothing me in these grave ornaments.
> *Legate.* I will attend upon your lordship's leisure. (*Leaves)*
> *Winchester.* Now Winchester will not submit, I trow,
> Or be inferior to the proudest peer.
> Humphrey of Gloucester, thou shalt well perceive
> That neither in birth or for authority
> The Bishop will be overborne by thee.
> I'll either make thee stoop and bend the knee
> Or sack this country with a mutiny.
> [5.1.51–62]

Scene 2 takes us to the Plains in Anjou where we meet Charles, Burgundy, Alencon, Bastard, Reignier and Joan. A scout informs them that the English army, once divided, is now united and poses a formidable opposition. But Joan scoffs at this new situation.

> *Joan.* Of all base passions fear is most accurs'd.
> Command the conquest, Charles, it shall be thine,
> Let Henry fret and all the world repine.
> [5.2. 18–20]

And so the French move on toward battle. In Scene Three, they reach the scene of battle. York has conquered, and the French are in flight. Joan asks for a sign from the Monarch of the North, Lucifer, of what will happen. The fiends enter but are silent. "Help me this once," she cries, "That France may get the field." They shake their heads and leave. "My incantations are too weak," she laments, "and hell too strong for me to buckle with. Now, France, thy glory droopeth to the dust."

The French fly, but Joan is taken prisoner by York. They exit the stage as Suffolk and Margaret enter. She, the daughter of Reignier, is his prisoner. He is smitten by her beauty and has fallen in love. "She's beautiful, and therefore to be woo'd; She is a woman, therefore to be won." But he is already married. And so he hits on a scheme to have Margaret marry King Henry. He confers with her father, who, in the interests of peace, consents to the marriage.

Scene Four takes us to the Duke of York in Anjou. Joan is condemned to be burned at the stake. After attempting to save herself by pleading pregnancy, her story falls apart amid shouting and argument. She is finally led away to her fate.

Cardinal Winchester then enters with a commission from the King to York to settle this war and come to terms with the French. York is outraged.

> Is all our travail turn'd to this effect?
> After the slaughter of so many peers,
> So many captains, gentlemen, and soldiers,
> That in this quarrel have been overthrown
> And sold their bodies for their country's benefit,
> Shall we at last conclude effeminate peace?
> [5.4. 102–107]

But Warwick reassures him. "Be patient, York. If we conclude a peace, It shall be with such strict and severe covenants As little shall the Frenchman gain thereby."

Charles, Alencon, Bastard, Reignier, and others enter to confer with the "lords of England" concerning the terms of the peace. York insists that Charles pledge loyalty to the King of England. He refuses at first, but then is cajoled by the others to accept. Charles pledges fealty to the crown of England and the rest give tokens of fealty. And thus a solemn peace is established.

Scene Five takes us back to the Palace in London. Suffolk tries to persuade the King to marry Margaret. The King is won over. But he is already committed to marry the daughter of the Earl of Armangnac. Gloucester and Exeter try to have the King honor his promise to marry Armangnac's daughter who would bring a very large dowry. But Suffolk cleverly argues that a marriage based on love is better than one based on force. The King finally succombs to Suffolk's persuasion and agrees to marry Margaret. He directs Suffolk to go to France and bring the beautiful Margaret back to England.

The scene ends with Suffolk, alone, revelling in his victory.

> Thus Suffolk hath prevail'd; and thus he goes
> As did the youthful Paris once to Greece,
> With hope to find the like event in love
> But prosper better than the Troyan did.
> Margaret shall now be Queen, and rule the King;
> But I will rule both her, the King, and the realm.
> [5.5. 103–108]

Thus ends the play with a clear indication of what is to come in the sequel.

The chance that someone without any known education, without any record of having written anything before 1593, at age 29, would be able to write a play of such complexity, with so many historical characters, is not only remote but beyond normal possibility. The play required a thorough and intimate knowledge of fifteenth-century English history acquired through many hours of reading and analysis. It also required the author to transform all of that detailed history into a drama enhanced by nothing less than poetic genius.

There was only one writer capable of such a daunting task: Christopher Marlowe, who had the education, the knowledge, and poetic skill to put it all

together. The reader finds his ingenious dramatic sense in virtually every scene, in which dialogue is skillfully used to quickly sketch characters in conflict with each other. The play revealed enormous talent and mastery of stage presentation, which would fare him well in the future.

25

Henry VI, Part Two

Henry VI, Part Two begins where *Part One* leaves off. In the last scene of *Part One*, Suffolk has succeeded in persuading the King to marry Margaret, daughter of Reignier, and is sent to France to make the necessary arrangements.

Act 1, Scene 1 takes place at the Palace. Suffolk has returned and informs the King that he married Margaret as the King's proxy in an elaborate ceremony, and he has brought Margaret to the King, who is quite taken by her beauty and "grace in speech."

Suffolk then asks Gloucester (Duke of Humphrey), the Protector, to read the "articles of contracted peace" between King Henry and French King Charles. But when Gloucester reads "that the duchy of Anjou and the county of Maine shall be released and delivered to the King her father," he suddenly drops the document and is unable to read any further. He claims to have become suddenly ill. The Cardinal of Winchester, Gloucester's enemy, picks up the reading, after which the King, Queen and Suffolk leave to attend Margaret's formal coronation as Queen.

Gloucester addresses the remaining peers, Salisbury, Warwick, York, Somerset, Buckingham, and the Cardinal of Winchester. He is griefstricken with the terms of the marriage contract in which the King received no dowry but gave away Anjou and Maine which had been conquered at great cost in blood. He cries out:

> O peers of England, shameful is this league!
> Fatal this marriage, cancelling your fame,
> Blotting your names from books of memory,
> Rasing the characters of your renown,
> Defacing monuments of conquer'd France,
> Undoing all as all had never been!
> [1.1. 97–102]

The Duke of York speaks:

> I never read but England's kings have had
> Large sums of gold and dowries with their wives,
> And our King Henry gives away his own
> To match with her that brings no vantages.
> [127–130]

After Gloucester leaves, the Cardinal cautions the peers: "Let not his soothing words bewitch your hearts; be wise and circumspect." He then leaves to counsel the Duke of Suffolk. But it is the Duke of York who is most affected by the growing dissension among the peers. Alone, he speaks:

> Anjou and Maine both given unto the French?
> Cold news for me! For I had hope of France,
> Even as I have of fertile England's soil.
> A day will come when York shall claim his own;
> And therefore I will take the Nevils' parts,
> And make a show of love to proud Duke Humphrey,
> And when I spy advantage, claim the crown,
> For that's the golden mark I seek to hit....
> Then York, be still awhile, till time do serve.
> Watch thou and wake while others be asleep,
> To pry into the secrets of the state,
> Till Henry, surfeiting in joys of love,
> With his new bride and England's dear-bought queen,
> And Humphrey with peers be fall'n at jars.
> Then will I raise aloft the milk-white rose,
> With whose sweet smell the air shall be perfum'd,
> And in my standard bear the arms of York
> To grapple with the house of Lancaster;
> And force perforce I'll make him yield the crown
> Whose bookish rule hath pull'd fair England down.
> [235–242, 247–258]

Scene 2 takes us to the house of the Duke of Gloucester in London. The Duke and his wife Eleanor enter the stage. She asks the Duke why does he look so unhappy. He tells her that he has had a bad dream:

> Methought this staff, mine office-badge in court,
> Was broke in twain; by whom I have forgot,
> But as I think, it was by th' Cardinal;
> And on the pieces of the broken wand
> Were plac'd the heads of Edmund Duke of Somerset
> And William de la Pole, first Duke of Suffolk.
> This was my dream. What it doth bode, God knows.
> [1.2.25–31]

His wife tells him it means that "he that breaks a stick of Gloucester's grove shall lose his head for his presumption." Then she goes on to relate a dream of her own:

> Methought I sat in seat of majesty
> In the cathedral church of Westminster
> And in that chair where kings and queens were crown'd;
> Where Henry and Dame Margaret kneel'd to me
> And on my head did set the diadem.
> [36–40]

Gloucester chides her. Aren't you powerful enough as wife of the Protector?

> And wilt thou still be hammering treachery
> To tumble down thy husband and thyself
> From top of honour to disgrace's feet?
> [47–49]

It was only a dream, she replies. "Next time I'll keep my dreams to myself and not be check'd." The Duke is assuaged. "I am pleas'd again," he says, ending the argument. A messenger than enters and tells the Duke that his presence is requested by the King and Queen to hawk at Saint Alban's. The Duke asks his wife to come with him. She tells him that she will follow presently. Alone she speaks:

> Follow I must; I cannot go before
> While Gloucester bears this base and humble mind.
> Were I a man, a duke, and next of blood,
> I would remove these tedious stumbling blocks
> And smooth my way upon their headless necks;
> And being a woman, I will not be slack
> To play my part in Fortune's pageant.
> [61–67]

In her obsessive quest for power she has enlisted the assistance of priest John Hume, Margery Jourdain, a witch, and Roger Bolingbroke, a conjurer. She pays Hume in gold. But what she doesn't realize is that Hume is already in the pay of the Cardinal and Suffolk to entrap her and Gloucester.

Scene 3 takes place in the Palace in London. Several petitioners have come to deliver their supplications to the Lord Protector. But he is not there. The Queen and Suffolk enter and request to see the supplications. One petitioner accuses his master, the Armourer, of having said that the Duke of York was the rightful heir to the crown. This upsets the Queen who tells them all to take their suits up with the Protector. When the Queen and Suffolk are alone, she complains about the King:

> I thought King Henry had resembled thee
> In courage, courtship, and proportion;
> But all his mind is bent to holiness,
> To number Ave-Maries on his beads;
> His champions are the prophets and apostles.
> His weapons holy saws of sacred writ;
> His study is his tiltyard, and his loves
> Are brazen images of cannonized saints.
> I would the college of the Cardinals
> Would choose him Pope and carry him to Rome
> And set the triple crown upon his head!
> [1.3. 51–61]

She also complains about the peers: Gloucester, the Cardinal, Somerset, Buckingham, and York. But her bitterest complaint is against Gloucester's wife:

Not all these lords do vex me one half as much
As that proud dame, the Lord Protector's wife.
She sweeps it through the court with troops of ladies,
More like an empress than Duke Humphrey's wife....
Shall I not live to be aveng'd on her?
Contemptuous base-born callot as she is,
She vaunted 'mongst her minions t'other day,
The very train of her worst wearing gown
Was better worth than all my father's lands
Till Suffolk gave two dukedoms for his daughter.
[73–76, 80–85]

Suffolk tells the Queen that the Lord Protector's wife will soon be taken care of. But he adds:

Although we fancy not the Cardinal
Yet must we join with him and with the lords
Till we have brought Duke Humphrey in disgrace.
As for the Duke of York, this late complaint
Will make but little for his benefit.
So one by one we'll weed them all at last,
And you yourself shall steer the happy helm.
[92–98]

At this point the King, Gloucester, the Cardinal, Buckingham, York, Somerset, Salisbury, Warwick, and the Duchess of Gloucester enter and join Suffolk and the Queen. The issue is who will be Regent in France. The King doesn't care who it will be. Which leads to an argument between the Queen and Gloucester, the Protector. Suffolk, the Cardinal, Somerset, Buckingham, and the Queen gang up on Gloucester and accuse him of corruption, cruelty, and misuse of public funds.

Gloucester leaves the chamber in a huff. The Queen drops her fan and accuses the Duchess of picking it up. "Give me my fan," she cries, and boxes the ear of the Duchess. "Was it you?"

Duchess. Was't I? Yea, I it was, proud Frenchwoman!
Could I come near your beauty with my nails,
I'ld set my ten commandments in your face.
[138–140]

After this delicious display of feminine fury, Gloucester returns to the chamber. He had walked about the quadrangle to cool his anger. He is now ready to deal with the affairs of the commonwealth. He recommends York to be Regent in France. But Suffolk protests.

The petitioner who accused the Armourer of having said that York was the rightful heir to the English crown is brought back into the chamber. The accused denies having ever made such a statement. Humphrey decides that because this dispute casts suspicion on York, that Somerset should be the Regent to France. He also condemns both petitioner and the Armourer to fight it out between themselves.

Scene 4 takes place in Gloucester's garden where it has been arranged for Eleanor Humphrey, the Duchess, to question the spirit that the witch and Bolingbroke will bring forth. When Eleanor asks why it is taking so long for the spirit to rise up, Bolingbroke explains:

> Patience, good lady; wizards know their times.
> Deep night, dark night, the silent of the night,
> The time of night when Troy was set on fire;
> The time when screech owls cry and bandogs howl
> And spirits walk and ghosts break up their graves—
> That time best befits the work we have in hand.
> [1.4. 14–19]

This whole scene reminds us of Doctor Faustus, and the reference to Troy reminds us of Dido. Marlowe had probably learned a lot about wizards and spirits from his relationship with the Ralegh group, and he may have even attended a seance or two. The Duke of Northumberland was numbered among his friends.

During the séance, Bolingbroke asks the spirit what shall become of the King, and what fate awaits the Duke of Suffolk. One of the priests present writes down the questions and answers. As the spirit descends to darkness, the session is interrupted by the sudden appearance of the Duke of York, Buckingham, and guards. All present are arrested, including the Duchess.

> *York.* The King is now in progress towards Saint Alban's,
> With him the husband of this lovely lady.
> Thither goes these news as fast as horse can carry them —
> A sorry breakfast for my Lord Protector.
> [71–74]

Act 2, Scene 1 takes place at Saint Alban's. On stage we find the King, Queen, Gloucester, the Cardinal, Suffolk, and the falconers. Whenever Gloucester and the Cardinal are in the same scene we can expect fireworks. Add Suffolk and the Queen and we get royal sarcasm and accusations. The King finally calls for peace.

Meanwhile, in a series of insulting asides, the Cardinal challenges Gloucester to a duel, "This evening at the east side of the grove."

All of this is interrupted by someone crying "A miracle!" It appears that a blind man has suddenly received sight at Saint Alban's shrine. After an elaborate comic scene, the blind man proves to be a fraud. Buckingham then arrives to bring the news of the arrest of Gloucester's wife for dealing with witches and conjurers, raising up wicked spirits, demanding of King Henry life and death.

Gloucester is shocked. "I banish her my bed and company and give her as a prey to law and shame that hath dishonoured Gloucester's honest name."

Scene 2 takes place in London, at the Duke of York's garden. On stage are York, Salisbury and Warwick. York spends most of the scene explaining to these peers the historical background to his claim to the throne. After which, both

Salisbury and Warwick pledge loyalty to York. York thanks them, but tells them that he is not their king until "my sword be stain'd with the heart-blood of the house of Lancaster."

Scene 3 takes place in the Hall of Justice where Gloucester's wife and her accomplices have been tried before the King and found guilty. They are all condemned to death, except for the Duchess who is banished to the Isle of Man in the care of Sir John Stanley. Gloucester is grief-stricken. Before he goes, the King asks for his staff as the King, urged by the Queen, now feels quite capable of protecting himself.

> *Gloucester.* My staff? Here, noble Henry, is my staff.
> As willingly do I the same resign
> As e'er thy father Henry made it mine.
> [2.3. 32–34]

After Gloucester leaves, York invites the King to witness the duel between the petitioner and the Armourer. This is another of Marlowe's light comic scenes. The petitioner wins.

Scene 4 is one of the saddest in the play. It takes place in a London street where Gloucester is waiting to see his wife led in a humiliating procession. Presently, the Duchess enters, barefoot in a white sheet with papers pinned upon her back and a candle burning in her hand. She is led by the Sheriff, and officers, and Sir John Stanley. She pleads with Gloucester to "ban thine enemies, both mine and thine." He replies:

> Thy greatest help is quiet, gentle Nell.
> I pray thee sort thy heart to patience;
> These few days' wonder will be quickly worn.
> [2.4. 67–69]

Meanwhile, a herald informs Gloucester that he is summoned to the King's parliament at the first of the month. He then asks Sir John Stanley to treat his wife well, and leaves.

Act 3, Scene 1 takes us to the Parliament where the King, Queen, Cardinal, Suffolk, York, Buckingham, Salisbury and Warwick are waiting for Gloucester to arrive. The Queen fills her husband with her own hatred and suspicion of Gloucester. "Humphrey is no little man in England. First note that he is near you in descent, and should you fall, he is the next will mount."

Suffolk then accuses Gloucester of having instigated his wife's "devilish practices" and of being full of "deep deceit." But the King defends Gloucester as being "virtuous, mild, and too well-given to dream on evil or to work my downfall." Somerset, the Regent of France, then enters with some very bad news.

> *King.* Welcome, Lord Somerset. What news from France?
> *Somerset.* That all your interest in those territories
> Is utterly bereft you. All is lost.
> *King.* Cold news, Lord Somerset! But God's will be done.
> [3.1. 83–86]

Gloucester finally arrives, and Suffolk loses no time in arresting him for treason. York makes accusations of corruption, which Gloucester answers forthrightly. Suffolk then commits Gloucester to the Cardinal, "To keep until your further time of trial." However, the King tells Gloucester, "My conscience tells me you are innocent." And when he is led away as a prisoner, the King erupts in grief. He cannot help him "so mighty are his vowed enemies. His fortunes I will weep, and 'twixt each groan say 'Who's a traitor? Gloucester he is none.'"

The King leaves, but the Queen, Suffolk, the Cardinal, York, and Somerset remain behind to plot Gloucester's murder. They all agree that he must be murdered, and the Cardinal promises to "provide his executioner."

A post then enters informing them that there has been an uprising in Ireland and that unless the rebellion be put down, it will spread and get worse. The question then becomes who should the King send to Ireland to quash the rebellion. Somerset and York exchange sarcastic barbs. York accuses Somerset of having lost France. Somerset says that York would have done worse. The Cardinal hopes to solve the problem:

> My lord of York, try what your fortune is.
> Th' uncivil kerns of Ireland are in arms
> And temper clay with blood of Englishmen.
> To Ireland will you lead a band of men,
> Collected choicely, from each county some,
> And try your hap against the Irishmen?
> [3.1. 309–314]

York agrees to go. "Provide me soldiers, Lords, whiles I take order for mine own affairs." And so it is agreed by all that York will undertake the task of subduing the Irish.

When all have left the stage, except York, he reveals his true plan in a soliloquy that is as powerful as anything one might find in *Hamlet*. In my opinion, it is further evidence that one man, Marlowe, wrote both plays. York speaks:

> Now, York, or never, steel thy fearful thoughts
> And change misdoubt to resolution....
> Faster than springtime show'rs comes thought on thought,
> And not a thought but thinks on dignity,
> My brain, more busy than the labouring spider,
> Weaves tedious snares to trap mine enemies.
> Well, nobles, well! 'tis politicly done
> To send me packing with a host of men....
> I take it kindly. Yet be well assur'd
> You put sharp weapons in a madman's hands.
> Whiles I in Ireland nourish a mighty band,
> I will stir up in England some black storm
> Shall blow ten thousand souls to heaven or hell;
> And this fell tempest shall not cease to rage
> Until the golden circuit on my head,
> Like to the glorious sun's transparent beams,
> Do calm the fury of this mad-bred flaw.

And for a minister of my intent
I have seduc'd a headstrong Kentishman,
John Cade of Ashford,
To make commotion, as full well he can,
Under the title of John Mortimer....
This devil here shall be my substitute;
For that John Mortimer which now is dead
In face, in gait, in speech, he doth resemble.
By this I shall perceive the commons' mind,
How they affect the house and claim of York.
Say he be taken, rack'd, and tortured;
I know no pain they can inflict upon him
Will make him say I mov'd him to those arms.
Say that he thrive, as 'tis great like he will;
Why, then from Ireland come I with my strength
And reap the harvest which that rascal sow'd;
For Humphrey being dead, as he shall be,
And Henry put apart, the next for me!
[331–359, 371–383]

Scene 2 takes us to a Room of State at Bury St. Edmund's. Two murderers have just killed Humphrey. They meet up with Suffolk who asks, "have you dispatched this thing?" They answer affirmatively. Suffolk then says:

Why, that's well said. Go, get you to my house.
I will reward you for this venturous deed.
[3.2. 8–9]

The murderers leave, and the King, Queen, Cardinal, and Somerset enter. The King is ready for Humphrey's trial and requests that he be brought forth. Suffolk goes to get Glouceter, but returns looking pale and trembling. The King asks: "What's the matter Suffolk?" He answers: "Dead in his bed, my lord! Gloucester is dead." The King faints, and when Suffolk revives him, he says:

Lay not thy hands on me. For bear, I say!
Their touch affrights me as a serpent's sting.
Thou baleful messenger, out of my sight!
[46–48]

The Queen, defending Suffolk, then unburdens herself with a long, furious diatribe of complaints. "Is all thy comfort shut in Gloucester's tomb," she asks the King. "Why, then Dame Margaret was ne'er thy joy." At the end of her diatribe, she says:

How often have I tempted Suffolk's tongue
(The agent of thy foul inconstancy)
To sit and witch me as Ascanius did
When he to madding Dido would unfold
His father's acts commenc'd in burning Troy!
[114–118]

Of this passage, Kittredge comments that Ascanius was the young son of Aeneas, and that goddess Venus caused Cupid to take the shape of Ascanius to bewitch Dido so that she would fall in love with Aeneas. All of this, of course, is in Marlowe's play, *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, the same play that is referred to by Hamlet.

Warwick now enters with Salisbury and many Commons. They have heard that Duke Humphrey has been murdered by Suffolk and the Cardinal. The King permits Warwick to enter the chamber and inspect Humphrey's body. After a very careful and meticulous examination, Warwick pronounces the cause of death murder.

The Queen and Suffolk protest Warwick's assessment. A ferocious argument ensues between Suffolk and Warwick, the latter referring to Suffolk as a "Pernicious blood-sucker of sleeping men!" The two men are about to duel one another when Suffolk is set upon by the men of Bury.

Meanwhile, Salisbury enters with a crowd of commoners to demand of the King that Suffolk "be done to death, or banished fair England's territories." If not, "they will by violence tear him from your palace and torture him with grievous ling'ring death." The King then gives Suffolk three days to leave the kingdom or face death. The Queen pleads for "gentle Suffolk," but this only angers the King who repeats his sentence.

When the Queen and Suffolk are left alone, we have easily one of the most exquisite farewell scenes between a man and a woman in English literature. Although the two of them are conniving villains, Marlowe sees them as devoted lovers whose plans have gone awry. Consider this scene in which the Queen kisses Suffolk's hand:

> ...Give me thy hand,
> That I may dew it with my mournful tears;
> Nor let the rain of heaven wet this place
> To wash away my woeful monuments.
> O, could this kiss be printed in thy hand,
> [*Kisses his hand.*]
> That thou mightst think upon these by the seal
> Through whom a thousand sighs are breath'd for thee!
> So get thee gone, that I may know my grief! ...
> Go, speak not to me. Even now be gone!
> O, go not yet! Even thus two friends condemn'd
> Embrace, and kiss, and take ten thousand leaves,
> Loather a hundred times to part than die.
> Yet now farewell, and farewell life with thee!
> [339–346, 352–356]

Vaux enters to inform the Queen that Cardinal Beaufort is at the point of death, that he is blaspheming God and talks as if Duke Humphrey's ghost were by his side. He then leaves, and the farewell scene between the two lovers continues until Suffolk finally leaves, on his way to France.

Scene 3 brings us to Cardinal Beaufort's bedchamber where the King,

Salisbury, and Warwick are at the Cardinal's bedside. He is wracked with guilt over the murder of Humphrey and is in a delerium. And when he finally dies, this very Christian King says:

> Forbear to judge, for we are sinners all.
> Close up his eyes and draw the curtain close,
> And let us all to meditation.
> [3.3. 31–33]

Act 4, Scene 1 takes us to the seashore in Kent. The ship on which Suffolk had been sailing to France had been attacked by pirates. Suffolk and other gentlemen are prisoners. The scene opens on shore where the Lieutenant, the pirate leader, is giving each of his mates a prisoner from whom he can collect ransom. Suffolk is taken by a notorious pirate by the name of Walter Whitmore, to whom he reveals his identity. The Lieutenant has heard of Suffolk and his nefarious deeds. Whitmore commands Suffolk to stoop before him and beg for his life. Suffolk refuses: "Let my head stoop to the block than these knees bow to any save to the God of Heaven and to my King.... True nobility is exempt from fear." Whitmore, furious, beheads Suffolk off-stage. He returns with the body: "There let his head and lifeless body lie until the Queen his mistress bury it."

Scene 2 takes us to Blackheath in Kent where Jack Cade's rebellion is taking place. Two men, George Bevis and John Holland, are discussing the situation.

> *Bevis.* I tell thee Jack Cade the clothier means to dress the commonwealth and turn it and set a new nap upon it.
> *Holland.* So he had need, for 'tis threadbare. Well, I say it was never merry world in England since gentlemen came up.
> *Bevis.* O miserable age! Virtue is not regarded in handicraftsmen.
> *Holland.* The nobility think scorn to go in leather aprons [4.2.4–10].

Note how Marlowe has these commoners speak in prose. The two men then comment on those who have joined the rebellion: Best's son, the tanner of Wingham; Dick the butcher; Smith the weaver.

Presently Cade enters with Dick Butcher, Smith the weaver, and others. Cade quiets the mob and tells them that his father was a Mortimer, his mother a Plantagenet, and therefore he is of an honorable house. As Cade speaks, we hear cynical Bevis and Holland, in their sarcastic and humorous asides, tell us of Cade's real background. Cade then pronounces his economic policy for England, which sounds an awful lot like unadulterated communism. He says:

> There shall be in England seven halfpenny loaves sold for a penny; the three-hoop'd pot shall have ten hoops, and I will make it felony to drink small beer.... There shall be no money; all shall eat and drink on my score; and I will apparel them all in one livery, that they may agree like brothers and worship me their lord [57–67].

The butcher then adds a comment, which has become one of the most quoted lines in the entire First Folio canon: "The first thing we do, let's kill all the lawyers."

The clerk of Chartham is then brought before Cade because he can read and write and do arithmetic. "O monstrous!" shouts Cade. "Dost thou use to write thy name? Or hast thou a mark to thyself, like an honest plain-dealing man?"

Clerk. Sir, I thank God, I have been so well brought up that I can write my name.
All. He hath confess'd! Away with him! He's a villain and a traitor!
Cade. Away with him, I say! Hang him with his pen and ink-horn about his neck.
[91–97]

Although Marlowe was a cobbler's son and understood the psychology of the craftsmen he was satirizing, he also understood the social structure of the commonwealth with its sharp distinction between the blue-bloods and the common folk. He himself, as a page to a nobleman and in going to Cambridge, had been able to emerge from the commoners and enter the world of the privileged. To Marlowe, Jack Cade's anarchy was bloody and destructive.

A follower named Michael enters and warns Cade that Sir Humphrey Stafford, his brother William, and the King's forces have arrived. They enter and confront Cade.

Stafford. Rebellious hinds, the filth and scum of Kent,
Mark'd for the gallows! Lay your weapons down;
Home to your cottages; forsake this groom.
The King is merciful, if you revolt.
[109–112]

But Cade tells them that he is the rightful heir to the throne, and he backs up his claim with his fictional pedigree. Stafford's brother replies: "Jack Cade, the Duke of York hath taught you this." Stafford, realizing that words are getting them nowhere, orders the herald to go through every town and proclaim Cade and his followers as traitors. But the Staffords are killed, and that emboldens Cade to march toward London.

Scene 4 takes place in the Palace in London where the King, the Queen (with Suffolk's head), the Duke of Buckingham and Lord Say are assessing the situation. A messenger enters informing the King that Cade has taken Southwark and urges the King to flee.

His army is a ragged multitude
Of hinds and peasants, rude and merciless.
Sir Humphrey Stafford and his brother's death
Hath given them heart and courage to proceed.
All scholars, lawyers, courtiers, gentlemen,
They call false caterpillars and intend their death.
[4.4. 32–37]

Does not Jack Cade remind us of Pol Pot who ordered anyone who wore glasses to be executed, for glasses were a sign of literacy and education? Another messenger arrives with even more frightening news.

Jack Cade hath gotten London Bridge;
The citizens fly and forsake their houses;

The rascal people, thirsting after prey,
Join with the traitor, and they jointly swear
To spoil the city and your royal court.
[49–53]

Scene 6 takes place on Cannon Street in London where we find Jack Cade and his followers.

Cade. Now is Mortimer lord of this city. And here, sitting upon London stone, I charge and command that, of the city's cost, the pissing conduit run nothing but claret wine this first year of our reign. And now henceforth it shall be treason for any that calls me other than Lord Mortimer [4.6. 1–6].

A soldier enters shouting Jack Cade! and Cade orders him to be killed. Cade is then told that an army against him has been formed in Smithfield. Cade and his men go after to fight them.

Scene 7 takes us to Smithfield where the royal forces have all been slain. Cade then orders that the Savoy and the Inns of Court be pulled down. The Butcher then suggests to Cade that "the laws of England may come out of your mouth." Cade agrees:

I have thought upon it; it shall be so. Away, burn all the records of the realm! My mouth shall be the parliament of England.... And henceforth all things shall be in common [4.7. 11–13, 16].

How amazing that Marlowe was able to anticipate the absolute fascist and communist dictators of the twentieth century.

A messenger enters announcing that they have captured Lord Say who is then brought before Cade. He is accused of having sold the towns in France.

Cade. Well, he shall be beheaded for it ten times.... Thou hast most traitorously corrupted the youth of the realm in erecting a grammar school; and whereas, before, our forefathers had no other books but the score and the tally, thou hast caused printing to be us'd, and, contrary to the King, his crown and dignity, thou hast built a paper mill. It will be proved to thy face that thou hast men about thee that usually talk of a noun and a verb and such abominable words as no Christian ear can endure to hear [21, 28–37].

All attempts by Lord Say to save his life fail, and he is beheaded. Cade then defines his absolute dictatorship:

The proudest peer in the realm shall not wear a head on his shoulders unless he pay me tribute. There shall not a maid be married but she shall pay to me her maidenhead ere they have it. Men shall hold of me *in capite;* and we charge and command that their wives be as free as heart can wish or tongue can tell [112–117].

There could hardly be a dictatorship more total than this, and it all comes out of the mouth of a commoner. Obviously, Marlowe had no sympathy for the common folk whose ignormance he knew well from his own upbringing. As he put in the mouth of Lord Say, "seeing ignorance is the curse of God, knowledge the wing wherewith we fly to heaven."

Scene 8 takes place in Southwark where Cade is urging his men to kill and destroy when he hears the sound for a parley. Buckingham and Old Clifford, ambassadors of the King, come to parley with Cade and the commons. The King offers free pardon to the commons if they will forsake Cade and go home in peace. The commons respond positively. But then Cade harangues them to follow him, and the commons hale Cade. But then Clifford reminds them of the deeds of Henry V and how his son will defend them against conquest by the French, and the commons decide to follow the King and Clifford. Cade then flees, and Buckingham offers a thousand crowns to any of his former followers that will bring back Cade's head.

Scene 9 takes place at Killingworth Castle. The King, Queen, and Somerset are present. Buckingham and Clifford then enter with the commons who have surrendered to the King. The King, happy at the defeat of Cade, pardons them all. A messenger then arrives, informing the King that the Duke of York "is newly come from Ireland and with a puissant and a mighty force ... is marching hitherward ... His arms are only to remove from thee the Duke of Somerset." The King sends Buckingham to ask York "what's the reason for these arms."

Scene 10 takes us to Kent where Cade had been hiding out for the last five days. Out of hunger he has climbed into a garden owned by Alexander Iden, an Esquire of Kent, to feed himself on greens. He is confronted by Iden. They fight and Cade is killed. But before he dies, Cade reveals his identity. Iden, thrilled with having killed Cade, tells the dead body:

> Hence will I drag thee headlong by the heels
> Unto a dunghill, which shall be thy grave,
> And there cut off thy most ungracious head,
> Which I will bear in triumph to the King,
> Leaving thy trunk for crows to feed upon.
> [4.10. 77–81]

Act Five, Scene One takes place on the fields between Dartford and Blackheath where York's army is encamped. York speaks:

> From Ireland thus comes York to claim his right
> And pluck the crown from feeble Henry's head.
> [5.1. 1–2]

Buckingham is sent by the King to find out why York should "raise so great a power without his leave or dare to bring thy force so near the court."

York replies that his purpose is to "remove proud Somerset from the King." Buckingham then states that Somerset is a prisoner in the Tower.

York then tells his men to disperse and to meet him "tomorrow in Saint George's field" to get their pay. Buckingham and York then go into the King's tent. While they are conferring, Iden enters with Cade's head. The King is overjoyed and, at the suggestion of Buckingham, knights Iden and awards him the one thousand marks.

The Queen then enters with Someset. When York sees that Somerset is at

liberty and not in the Tower, he accuses the King of being a liar and that he is not fit to wear the crown. "Give place," he cries. "Thou shalt rule no more o'er him whom heaven created for thy ruler." Somerset immediately calls for York's arrest for treason. When he orders York to "kneel for grace," York retorts: "Wouldst have me kneel? First let me ask of these if they can brook I bow a knee to man." He then asks that his two sons be brought in to be his bail.

The Queen then bids Clifford to say if "the bastard boys of York shall be the surety for their traitor father." York then turns to the Queen:

> O blood-bespotted Neapolitan
> Outcast of Naples, England's bloody scourge!
> The sons of York, thy betters in their birth,
> Shall be their father's bail; and bane to those
> That for my surety will refuse the boys!
> [117–121]

Clifford agrees with the Queen that York and his sons are "a brood of traitors." York then calls for the Earls of Warwick and Salisbury to come to him. When they enter they refuse to bow to the King. All of this leads to battle.

Scene 2 takes us to the battlefield at Saint Alban's. Warwick calls for Clifford to come out and fight him. But York enters and requests Warwick to let him fight Clifford, which he does and kills Clifford. Young Clifford comes across his father's dead body and vows revenge. Meanwhile, York's son Richard battles with Somerset and kills him. The King and Queen, faced with the choice of staying or flying to London, fly to safety.

In Scene 3, the final scene of the play, we find York, Richard, Warwick and soldiers in a field near Saint Alban's. York is worried about Salisbury, but presently Salisbury shows up, rejoicing in their victory over the forces of the King who has fled to London to call a present court of parliament. York declares, "Let us pursue him ere the writs go forth." Warwick, enthused, ends the play with these words:

> After them? Nay, before them if we can!
> Now, by my faith, lords, 'twas a glorious day.
> Saint Alban's battle, won by famous York,
> Shall be eterniz'd in all age to come.
> Sound drums and trumpets, and to London all;
> And more such days as these to us befall!
> [5.3. 28–33]

What an incredibly exciting play, a pageant of historical power politics, adultery, murder, rebellion, and the terror of a mob-supported dictatorship. All in one play. Brilliant theatrics by a master playwright.

26

Henry VI, Part Three

Part Three of the trilogy was probably written in 1591 and performed before July of 1592, for in September of that year one of its lines, "O tiger's heart wrapp'd in a woman's hide" was parodied by Robert Greene in his posthumously published *A Groatsworth of Wit*. Thus, its significance has been enhanced by that fact. The play continues the story of the War of the Roses.

Act I, Scene I takes place at Parliament House. York, his sons Edward and Richard, Norfolk, Montague, Warwick and soldiers have arrived at Parliament House before the King. They discuss how they will deal with the King when he enters. York has seated himself on the throne. Presently King Henry, Clifford, Northumberland, Westmoreland, Exeter and others enter. A dispute ensues over who is the rightful King. After much acrimonious argument, York makes an offer to the King:

> Confirm the crown to me and to mine heirs
> And thou shalt reign in quiet while thou liv'st.
> [I.I. 172–173]

In order to avoid further bloodshed, King Henry, against the strong objections of his followers, agrees. He addresses York:

> ... I here entail
> The crown to thee and to thine heirs for ever,
> Conditionally that here thou take an oath
> To cease this civil war, and whilst I live
> To honour me as thy king and sovereign,
> And neither by treason nor hostility
> To seek to put me down and reign thyself.
> *York.* This oath I willingly take, and will perform.
> [I.I. 194–201]

York and his men leave. The Queen then enters with the Prince of Wales, Henry's heir. She is livid with rage having been told by several loyalists what the King has done, disinheriting his own son. She lashes into him:

Ah, wretched man! Would I had died a maid
And never seen thee, never borne thee son,
Seeing thou hast prov'd so unnatural a father!
Hath he deserv'd to lose his birthright thus?
[1.1. 216–219]

Henry protests that he was forced into this agreement. But the Queen is beside herself in anger:

Enforc'd thee? Art thou King, and wilt be enforc'd?
I shame to hear thee speak. Ah, timorous wretch!
Thou has undone thyself, thy son, and me,
And giv'n unto the house of York such head
As thou shalt reign but by their sufferance.
[1.1. 230–234]

The Queen then vows to lead an army against York.

Scene 2 takes place at Sandal Castle near Yorkshire. York's sons Richard and Edward and Montague question the wisdom of the agreement their father made with the King. "By giving the house of Lancaster leave to breathe, it will outrun you, father, in the end," argues Edward (1.2. 13–14).

York protests that he took an oath so that Henry should reign quietly until his death. "Your oath, my lord," Richard contends, "is vain and frivolous. Therefore to arms" (1.2. 27–28).

Finally convinced to break the oath, York makes plans to take the throne by force. However, a messenger brings news that the Queen and her army are about to besiege the castle. Although York's forces are greatly outnumbered by the Queen, he is convinced that he can beat her.

Scene 3 takes place on a battlefield between Sandal Castle and Wakefield. Clifford has caught York's youngest son Rutland and his Tutor. The Tutor is dragged away, and Rutland is killed by Clifford.

Scene 4 takes us to another place in the field where York, defeated by the Queen's forces, confronts Clifford, the Queen, Northumberland, and the Prince of Wales. The Queen, exultant in her victory, does all she can to humiliate York, yet she gives him the last chance to have his say.

York. She-wolf of France, but worse than wolves of France,
Whose tongue more poisons than the adder's tooth!
How ill-beseeming is it in thy sex
To triumph like an Amazonian trull
Upon their woes whom fortune captivates! ...
O tiger's heart wrapp'd in a woman's hide! ...
Women are soft, mild, pitiful, and flexible;
Thou stern, obdurate, flinty, rough, remorseless.
[1.4. 111–115, 137–142]

See, ruthless queen, a hapless father's tears.
This cloth thou dipp'dst in blood of my sweet boy,
And I with tears do wash the blood away....

There, take the crown, and with the crown my curse;
And in thy need such comfort come to thee
As now I reap at thy too cruel hand!
Hard-hearted Clifford, take me from the world.
My soul to heaven, my blood upon your heads.
[1.4. 156–158, 164–168]

Both Clifford and the Queen stab York to death. "Off with his head," she cries, "and set it on York gates."

Act 2, Scene 1, takes place on a plain near Mortimer's Cross in Herefordshire. York's two sons are wondering what might have happened to their father. A messenger arrives bringing them the bad news. He tells them how his father was finally killed.

By many hands your father was subdu'd,
But only slaughtered by the ireful arm
Of unrelenting Clifford and the queen....
They took his head and on the gates of York
They set the same; and there it doth remain.
[2.1. 56–58, 65–66]

Richard vows to avenge his father's murder. And since Edward has inherited his father's dukedom, he is entitled to the throne that Henry agreed to. At this point, Warwick and Montague enter, with their army. Warwick brings additional bad news. On hearing of York's death, he rallied a force to march toward Saint Alban's and intercept the Queen. He and King Henry were determined to enforce the agreement made with York at the Parliament. But the Queen was determined to nullify it. And in the ferocious battle that ensued, they were beaten.

After lengthy consultation, Richard, Edward, Warwick and Montague agree, with the help of the Duke of Norfolk, to fight the Queen and win the crown for Edward. Just as they are about to leave, a messenger from the Duke of Norfolk arrives informing them that the Queen is coming with a powerful force and that the Duke "craves your company for speedy counsel." They immediately leave.

Scene 2 takes place before the town of York. King Henry, Queen Margaret, Clifford, Northumberland, and the young Prince enter. Clifford tries to convince the King that he must be ruthless toward the Yorkists and restore his son's inheritance. But the King is committed to honoring the oath he made to York even though he can see York's head impaled at the gate. He turns to Clifford:

...Clifford, tell me, didst thou never hear
That things ill got had ever bad success?
And happy always was it for that son
Whose father for his hoarding went to hell?
I'll leave my son my virtuous deeds behind,
And would my father had left me no more!
[2.2. 45–50]

The Queen then urges Henry to knight his son, as promised, and so he does.

A messenger then brings news that Warwick with an army of thirty thousand men is on his way to do battle. As they march through the towns they proclaim Edward, the Duke of York, as King. When they finally reach York, a parley takes place between the leaders of the two forces.

Edward demands that King Henry live up to his oath and crown him the legitimate ruler. But Henry is paralyzed by the arguments that go forth between Richard and Warwick with Clifford and the Queen. Finally, in complete exasperation, Edward ends the conference, and opts to settle the affair by war.

Scene 3 takes place on a battlefield between Towton and Saxton in Yorkshire. Warwick enters breathless and exhausted. The battle has gone poorly, and they face defeat. Richard enters and urges Warwick not to give up but to continue to seek revenge for the death of his brother, the Duke of York. Warwick vows to keep fighting and die in the process.

Scene 4 takes place in another part of the field. Richard and Clifford have come face to face. They fight, but when Warwick enters, Clifford flees. Richard vows that he will "hunt this wolf to death."

Scene 5 takes place in another part of the field. King Henry, now alone, bemoans his fate. The battle is still undecided. The King's attitude is "To whom God will, there be the victory!" He wishes he were dead, "for what is in this world but grief and woe." In this fifty-three line soliloquy he compares his troubled life to that of a homely shepherd whose life he sweetly enjoys.

Suddenly, a son who has mistakenly killed his father in battle enters. The King is griefstricken at the sight of this horrible tragedy. But then, at another door, enters a father who has mistakenly killed his son. The King, witnessing all of this tragedy, is beyond consolation. He thinks:

> O, pity, pity, gentle heaven, pity!
> The red rose and the white are on his face,
> The fatal colours of our striving houses.
> The one his purple blood right well resembles;
> The other his pale cheeks, methinks, presenteth.
> Whither one rose, and let the other flourish!
> [2.5. 96–101]

The Queen, the Prince, and Exeter enter. The Prince urges his father to flee with them, for Warwick "rages like a chafed bull," and Edward and Richard "are at our backs." And so the King leaves with them.

Scene 6 takes place at another part of the field. Clifford enters wounded. He thinks on his own tragic fate and faints. Edward, Richard, Warwick, Montague, Clarence, and soldiers enter the scene. They hear Clifford, who moans and then dies. Warwick, coming upon the body, decides that York's head will be replaced by Clifford's at the gate. He speaks:

> And now to London with triumphant march,
> There to be crowned England's royal King;

From whence shall Warwick cut the sea to France
And ask the Lady Bona for thy queen.
So shalt thou sinew both these lands together.
[2.6. 87–91]

Act 3, Scene 1, takes place in a forest in the north of England. The scene opens with two Keepers, Sinklo and Humfrey, with crossbows in their hands. They are deer hunting. King Henry enters wearing a disguise. They overhear him talking to himself about what has happened. They approach him and ask whether or not he is the former king. Henry admits that he is. After much discussion, the Keepers decide to arrest Henry and bring him to the local officials.

Scene 2 takes us to the Palace in London. King Edward, Richard of Gloucester, Clarence, and Lady Grey enter. Lady Grey has come to the King to gain back her husband's lands which were seized in the battle of Saint Alban's in which her husband was killed. The King is willing to grant the suit but wants something in return. He finds the widow most attractive and is willing to give her what she wants provided she lie with him. The widow replies, "To tell you plain, I had rather lie in prison." But Edward will not be denied, and so he proposes to marry her and make her queen. He does this with the full knowledge that Warwick is in France arranging a marriage between Edward and the French king's sister, Lady Bona.

The King is then informed of King Henry's capture and they all leave for the Tower, except Richard who remains alone. In a seventy-seven line soliloquy Richard reveals his true murderous nature. He is intensely jealous of his brother Edward who wears the crown, which he himself wants. He bemoans his horrible deformities:

Why, love forswore me in my mother's womb;
And, for I should not deal in her soft laws,
She did corrupt frail nature with some bribe
To shrink mine arm up like a wither'd shrub;
To make an envious mountain on my back,
Where sits deformity to mock my body;
To shape my legs of an unequal size;
To disproportion me in every part....
And am I then a man to be belov'd?
O monstrous fault to harbour such a thought!
Then, since this earth affords no joy to me...
I'll make my heaven to dream upon the crown...
And yet I know not how to get the crown,
For many lives stand between me and home.
[3.2. 153–173]

In thinking of the horrible things he will have to do to gain the crown, he will "set the murderous Machiavel to school."

Scene 3 takes place in the King's Palace in France. Enter Lewis, the French King, his sister Bona, his admiral Bourbon, Prince Edward, Queen Margaret, and the Earl of Oxford. Queen Margaret explains her predicament to the King

who offers her future help. Meanwhile Warwick enters. With great diplomatic eloquence he asks the King to agree to a marriage between King Edward and Bona. An argument breaks out between Warwick, Margaret, and Oxford. The King puts a stop to the arguing, and questions Warwick:

> Now, Warwick, tell me, even upon they conscience,
> Is Edward your true king? For I were loath
> To link with him that were not lawful chosen....
> Then further: all dissembling set aside,
> Tell me for truth the measure of his love
> Unto our sister Bona.
>
> [3.3. 113–121]

Again, Warwick uses his eloquence to affirm Edward's love and legitimacy. The king agrees to the match. "Our sister shall be Edward's." Margaret protests, but to no avail.

But then the post arrives with letters for Warwick, the King, and Margaret. Warwick is shocked to learn of Edward's marriage to Lady Grey. He speaks:

> King Lewis, I here protest in sight of heaven
> And by the hope I have of heavenly bliss
> That I am clear from this misdeed of Edward's—
> No more my king, for he dishonours me,
> But most himself, if he could see his shame....
> I here renounce him and return to Henry.
> My noble queen, let former grudges pass,
> And henceforth I am thy true servitor.
> I will revenge his wrong to Lady Bona
> And replant Henry in his former state.
>
> [3.3. 181–185, 194–198]

Queen Margaret is overjoyed at this turn of events. Warwick then asks the king for his assistance in overthrowing Edward and placing Henry back on the throne. The king agrees to furnish Warwick with an army of five thousand men to do battle with Edward. And as a sign of unchanging loyalty, Warwick pledges to give his daughter's hand in marriage to Prince Edward.

Act 4, Scene 1, takes place at the Palace in London. Richard, Clarence, Somerset and Montague are present. They are all concerned with Edward's marriage and its ramifications in France. King Edward then enters with his new queen, Lady Grey, and with Pembroke, Stafford, and Hastings. The King wants to know their opinions: who is for him and who against. They all express misgivings over the new state of affairs. But what really riles Richard and Clarence is the fact that the King has given his wife's relatives special favoritism.

> *Richard.* And yet methinks your Grace hath not done well
> To give the heir and daughter of Lord Scales
> Unto the brother of your loving bride.
> She better would have fitted me or Clarence;
> But in your bride you bury brotherhood.

Clarence. Or else you would have bestow'd the heir
Of the Lord Bonville on your new wife's son
And leave your brothers to go speed elsewhere.
[4.1. 51–58]

But King Edward promises to make amends. "I will provide thee." But then he leaves no doubt as to who is boss. "Leave me or tarry, Edward will be King and not be tied unto his brother's will" (65–66).

A Post enters bringing news from France. While delivering Edward's letters to King Lewis, Warwick, and Margaret, he heard their reactions. Edward is anxious to know Warwick's reaction.

Post. He, more incens'd against your Majesty
Than all the rest, discharg'd me with these words:
"Tell him from me that he hath done me wrong,
And therefore I'll uncrown him ere't be long."
King Edward. Ha! durst the traitor breathe out so proud words?
Well, I will arm me, being thus forewarn'd.
They shall have wars and pay for their presumption.
But say, is Warwick friends with Margaret?
Post. Ay, gracious sovereign. They are so link'd in friendship
That young Prince Edward marries Warwick's daughter.
Clarence. Belike the elder; Clarence will have the younger.
Now, brother king, farewell and sit you fast;
For I will hence to Warwick's other daughter,
That, though I want a kingdom, yet in marriage
I may not prove inferior to yourself.
You that love me and Warwick, follow me.
[4.1. 108–123]

Clarence and Somerset leave. The King is left with Richard, Pembroke, Stafford, Hastings and Montague. They prepare for war.

Scene 2 takes us to a plain in Warwickshire where we find Warwick and Oxford with French soldiers. Warwick assures Oxford that the common people are with them. Clarence and Somerset enter, declaring their friendship. Warwick is delighted and pledges his daughter to Clarence. He also tells Clarence that he is planning a surprise attack against King Edward's camp.

Scene 3 takes place at Edward's camp, near Warwick. Warwick and his men steal silently toward Edward's tent, overcome the guards, and capture the King. Warwick removes the crown from Edward's head and reduces him back to the Duke of York. He instructs Somerset to take Edward to his brother, the Archbishop of York, where the

Duke will be held prisoner. Warwick then leads his forces to London to free King Henry and "see him seated on the regal throne."

Scene 4 takes us to the Palace in London, where we find the Queen, Lady Grey, and her brother Rivers, discussing their predicament. She is pregnant with Edward's heir and decides to seek safety at a protected sanctuary.

In Scene 5, which takes place in a park near Middle Castle in Yorkshire,

Richard, Lord Hastings, and Stanley plan to free Edward from captivity. The Archbishop has permitted Edward to engage in the hunt, accompanied by a huntsman, while in captivity. They manage to encounter Edward and the huntsman, and Edward quickly makes his escape, with the huntsman joining the force.

Scene 6 takes us to the Tower in London where Warwick, Clarence, Somerset, Oxford, Montague, and young Henry Earl of Richmond have freed King Henry from imprisonment. The King is extremely grateful and appoints Clarence and Warwick as Protectors of the realm so that he can pursue his religious devotions in his latter days.

King Henry then requests that Queen Margaret and his son Edward be brought from France as soon as possible.

A Post then enters and informs them all of Edward's escape from the Bishop's confines. This means further war.

Scene 7 opens before York. Edward, Richard, and Hastings have just returned from Flanders where they had gone after Edward's escape to prevent his recapture. Now they have returned with soldiers and want to enter York. But the Mayor will not let them in since they now owe their allegiance to King Henry. But Edward claims to only want his dukedom and is a friend to the king. After which the Mayor opens the gates and lets them in.

Upon entering the town, Edward is greeted by Sir John Montgomery and his soldiers who expect Edward to proclaim that he is king. But Edward's plan is to "forget our title to the crown and only claim our dukedom till God please to send the rest."

But Montgomery had come to defend a king not a duke and is about to leave when Edward is persuaded by Richard and Hastings to forgo caution and pronounce himself King. This Edward does and announces his plan to go immediately after Warwick, Clarence, and Henry.

Scene 8 takes us to the Bishop of London's Palace in London. There we find King Henry, Warwick, Montague, Clarence, Oxford, and Exeter. They have learned that Edward has returned from Belgia with "hasty Germans and blunt Hollanders" and is marching toward London. Warwick instructs his men to return to their home counties and round up their armies and meet in Coventry. They all depart, leaving King Henry alone with Exeter.

Suddenly, Edward and his men enter the palace and take Henry captive. "Hence with him to the Tower," orders Edward. "Let him not speak." Edward then instructs his forces towards Coventry, "where peremptory Warwick now remains."

Act 5, Scene 1, takes us to Coventry where Warwick awaits the arrival of troops with Oxford, Montague, and Clarence. But Edward and his forces arrive before Warwick's troops can reach him. Edward calls for a parley with Warwick.

> *Edward.* Now, Warwick, wilt thou ope the city gates,
> Speak gentle words, and humbly bend thy knee,
> Call Edward king, and at his hands beg mercy?
> And he shall pardon thee these outrages.

Warwick. Nay rather, wilt thou draw thy forces hence,
Confess who set thee up and pluck'd thee down,
Call Warwick patron, and be penitent?
And thou shalt still remain the Duke of York.
[5.1. 21–28]

Richard then informs Warwick that Henry his king is now Edward's prisoner in the Tower. And while the parley is going on Oxford, Montague, and Somerset arrive with their troops. But Clarence switches sides and goes back to his brother Edward. "Pardon me, Edward," he cries, "I will make amends." The two sides then agree to do battle on a field near Barnet.

Scene 2 brings us to the battlefield where Warwick has already been mortally wounded. Left alone by Edward to die, Warwick reflects philosophically on his life:

These eyes, that now are dimm'd with death's black veil
Have been as piercing as the midday sun
To search the secret treasons of the world....
Lo now my glory smear'd in dust and blood!
My parks, my walks, my manors that I had,
Even now forsake me; and of all my lands
Is nothing left me but my body's length!
Why, what is pomp, rule, reign, but earth and dust?
And, live we how we can, yet die we must.
[5.2. 16–18, 23–28]

At this point, both Oxford and Somerset arrive and inform Warwick that Queen Margaret has landed with her troops and is ready to oppose Edward. They also inform Warwick of Montague's death, after which Warwick dies.

Scene 3 takes place at another part of the battlefield. King Edward in triumph is conferring with Richard, Clarence and others about how to meet the new threat from Queen Margaret's forces. They have also learned that her force is headed toward Tewkesbury. Edward orders his forces to head in that direction, picking up support from the towns they pass through.

In Scene 4, at the Plains near Tewksbury, Queen Margaret speaks to her lords. She compares their cause to a foundering ship.

We will not from the helm, to sit and weep,
But keep our course (though the rough wind say no)
From shelves and rocks that threaten us with wrack.
As good to chide the waves as speak them fair.
And what is Edward but a ruthless sea?
What Clarence but a quicksand of deceit?
And Richard but a ragged fatal rock?
All these the enemies to our poor bark.
[5.4. 21–28]

With certain defeat staring them in the face, Margaret then gives those "would fly from us" permission to do so. For "there's no hop'd for mercy with

the brothers more than with ruthless waves, with sands and rocks." A messenger then comes informing them that "Edward is at hand, ready to fight."

In Scene 5 the battle has already taken place and King Edward has won. Oxford and Somerset have been taken prisoner and executed. Henry's son, Prince Edward, arrives and demands that King Edward kneel before him and acknowledge Henry's sovereignty. But the Prince is insulted by Richard and he calls them all traitors. King Edward then stabs the young Prince, Richard stabs him, and Clarence stabs him. Richard also offers to kill Queen Margaret, but Edward tells him to hold off.

Richard then takes off for the Tower in London, while Queen Margaret, grief-stricken, laments the murder of her young son. She begs Clarence to kill her. She looks for Richard to kill her, but he's not there. She is then led away.

King Edward. Where's Richard gone?
Clarence. To London, all in post; and, as I guess,
To make a bloody supper in the Tower.
King Edward. He's sudden if a thing comes to his head.
Now march we hence, discharge the common sort
With pay and thanks, and let's away to London
And see our gentle queen how well she fares.
By this, I hope, she hath a son for me.
[5.5. 83–90]

Scene Six takes place in the Tower of London. King Henry greets Richard who has come to kill him. What takes place is the same kind of strange conversation that took place between Edward II and his executioner. Marlowe has a special talent for writing such bizarre scenes.

King Henry. But wherefore dost thou come? Is't for my life?
Richard. Think'st thou I am an executioner?
King Henry. A persecutor I am sure thou art.
If murdering innocents be executing,
Why, then thou art an executioner.
Richard. Thy son I killed for his presumption.
King Henry. Hadst thou been kill'd when first thou didst presume,
Thou hadst not liv'd to kill a son of mine.
And thus I prophesy, that many a thousand...
Shall rue the hour that ever thou wast born.
The owl shriek'd at thy birth, an evil sign;
[5.6. 29–37, 43–44]

King Henry then calls Richard "an indigested and deformed lump" (51), at which point Richard stabs King Henry to death. Richard then reiterates his desire to be king.

Richard. King Henry and the Prince his son are gone.
Clarence, thy turn is next, and then the rest.
[89–90]

Scene 7 takes us to the Palace in London where we find King Edward, Queen Elizabeth, Clarence, Richard, Hastings, and a Nurse with the little Prince. Edward is most pleased with the fact that he is now the uncontested King of England and that all of his enemies have been vanquished. He kisses his son, and then invites Clarence and Gloucester (Richard) to kiss him.

> *Richard.* And that I love the tree from whence thou sprang'st
> Witness the loving kiss I give the fruit.
> [*Aside*] To say the truth, so Judas kiss'd his master
> And cried "All hail!" when as he meant all harm.
> *King Edward.* Now am I seated as my soul delights,
> Having my country's peace and brothers' loves.
> [5.7. 31–36]

As for Margaret, she was ransomed by her father, Reignier, and was sent back to France.

Thus ends the saga of King Henry and victory of the House of York over the House of Lancaster.

One can hardly believe that these three highly complex masterpieces were the work of a novice who, as far as we know, never had any schooling and was not known as a writer. And that is why so many scholars find it so difficult to prove that these three plays were the first works of William Shakespeare. The author had to take the bare bones of a very complicated history, put the flesh of poetry and character on the bones, and create a thrilling, suspenseful drama. It is true that the author took some liberties with the historical record, but in general his telling of the story is as historically accurate and compelling as anyone could have made it.

In addition, the narrative, which starts in Part One, is not only carried forth as a single drama to its end in Part Three, but is historically carried forward to the next play in which evil Richard takes center stage.

An intensive study of the three parts of *Henry VI* should leave no doubt that the plays were written by Marlowe. There is a continuity of style from earlier Marlowe plays right through the three parts of *Henry VI.* He gave the Elizabethan audiences a breathtaking and harrowing view of what it took in terms of evil connivance and ambition to become a king.

27

Marlowe and Burghley

There are several significant documents that establish a close relationship between Christopher Marlowe and Lord Burghley, the most powerful man in Queen Elizabeth's government. The start of this relationship is unknown, but it may well have begun when Marlowe was a mere boy of eight and recruited as a page for Philip Sidney, in whom Burghley had taken great interest . Burghley himself had been a page at age eight and therefore knew of their practical helpfulness to nobles embarking on Continental tours. Burghley had obtained a wardship in 1553, and in 1561 became Master of the Court of Wards, in charge of the destinies of many heirs and heiresses of the nobility and gentry, the future leaders of England. He was probably also responsible for recruiting pages to serve the young nobles.

That young Marlowe was indeed a page is corroborated by the fact that he did not serve as his father's apprentice. Ordinarily, as the oldest son, he would have been an apprentice to his father, a cobbler. But the evidence indicates that John Marlowe hired an apprentice to serve in his son's place, and that he was so well compensated by his son's service as a page, that the family was able to move to better quarters. It probably did not take much persuading by Archbishop Parker for John Marlowe to allow his precocious and talkative son to better his station in life by serving as a page to an aristocrat.

Who brought the young, bright Christopher to the attention of Burghley? It was probably Matthew Parker, the Archbishop of Canterbury, under whose auspices Marlowe later entered the King's School. Burghley was responsible for getting Queen Elizabeth to appoint Parker as Archbishop in 1559, and he probably relied upon the prelate to find potential pages among the young boys in Canterbury.

One of Burghley's most important wards was the young Earl of Southampton, who lived in Burghley's household and whose proper education was the statesman's great concern. Burghley enrolled him at St. John's, his own alma mater. The Earl entered the college in the autumn of 1585, at age 12 as Fellow-commoner, and he matriculated as a member of the university on December 11.

He remained at Cambridge for the next four years as a student. Marlowe had been at Cambridge since December 1580, and Burghley may have employed Marlowe to tutor the young Earl. A.L. Rowse writes of Southampton's education at Cambridge (p. 47):

> He became fond of books and writers, appreciated their company and set much store by being regarded as a patron of literature. That he in turn was grateful to St. John's College is witnessed by the munificent gift of manuscript and books which he subsequently made, to become a chief glory of the college library there.

Was it Marlowe's tutoring that inspired the young Earl with a lifelong love of poetry? Robert Cecil, Burghley's son, was also at Cambridge at the same time as Marlowe. It is likely that Burghley made sure that the two students, Cecil was a year older than Marlowe, would get to know one another. It was also while Marlowe was at Cambridge that he was recruited into Elizabeth's Secret Service, run by Burghley and Walsingham.

Marlowe's first major assignment was a dangerous mission to the Catholic seminary at Rheims in July of 1585, where he pretended to be interested in converting to Catholicism in order to ingratiate himself with the authorities there. Both Walsingham and Burghley wanted to know what the English Catholic students at Rheims were plotting. The great battle between Protestants and Catholics was very much in evidence at Cambridge and had become of great concern to Burghley and Walsingham.

However, when Marlowe returned from Rheims he had trouble getting his Master's Degree because it was suspected that he had secretly converted to Catholicism. It was at this point that Burghley came to the rescue by having a letter sent from the Privy Council to the university authorities, informing them of Marlowe's loyal service to the Queen and of his being entitled to receive his Master's Degree.

That letter from the Privy Council, with Burghley's signature on it, is evidence of what was certainly a close working relationship between the young poet and the most powerful man in the realm. And one can hardly doubt that Marlowe continued to be a valuable asset in Burghley's intelligence efforts. Marlowe was indeed intelligent, trustworthy, reliable, resourceful, a great writer, and said to have had an extraordinary memory. And he was also fluent in French and probably in Italian, learned while in Italy with Sidney. He may have also learned German during the time spent in Germany and Vienna. He may have been Burghley's most intelligent spy.

Both Burghley and Walsingham were in great need of good intelligence. They were concerned with goings on in Scotland, France, and Spain and among Catholics in England itself. As Walsingham had commented, no price was too high for good intelligence. Under such circumstances, Marlowe was indeed a prized asset.

It should be noted that Marlowe was not the first Parker scholar to enter government service. Nicholas Faunt, who became Walsingham's secretary in

1580, had attended both the King's School and Corpus Christi. Faunt, ten years older than Marlowe, and a fellow, Cantaburian, was also at the embassy in Paris at the time of the St. Bartholomew massacre, and he is credited with having been sent by Walsingham to give Queen Elizabeth an oral account of what took place. Thus, it is highly probable that Marlowe and Faunt knew one another.

There is also evidence that Burghley took good advantage of Marlowe's talents as a tutor and managed to have him tutor Arbella Stuart, an heir, after James, to the throne of England. Arbella, born in 1575, was the daughter of Charles Stuart, 5th Earl of Lennox, younger brother of Lord Darnley, and of Elizabeth, daughter of Sir William Cavendish and "Bess of Hardwick," her illustrious grandmother who had five husbands. She was next in succession to James VI of Scotland to the thrones of England and Scotland after Queen Elizabeth. Her father died a year after her birth, in 1576, at the age of 21.

Lord Burghley took an interest in her education, not only because she was next in line after James to succeed Elizabeth, but because he favored women being given the best education possible. His wife and sister-in-law were perfect examples of well-educated women. We believe that it was Marlowe who provided that classical education to Arbella. Sara Jayne Steen writes in her book *The Letters of Lady Arbella Stuart* (p. 4):

> Stuart was one of the last of the aristocratic Englishwomen to be formally educated in the classical tradition of Greek and Roman learning and languages, an education normally reserved for men but that had been extended to women by the early Renaissance humanists.

The result is that she became known as intelligent, verbal, and well-read. Apparently, she had been provided by her grandmother with excellent tutors, one of whom was probably Marlowe, recommended by Burghley. Marlowe had left Cambridge for London in 1587 where Arbella was also living at the Talbots' Coleman Street residence. If Marlowe had indeed tutored the princess, it would have been between 1587 and 1592. We find corroboration of this in Mary S. Lovell's biography, *Bess of Hardwick*. Lovell writes that Lord Burghley had learned of a Jesuit plan to kidnap Arbella (p. 392):

> Burghley, who always realised Arbella's potential in connection with the throne (even though the Queen chose to ignore it), warned Bess to check the neighbourhood for Jesuits and Catholics.
>
> ...Having had the district searched for "traitorous and naughty persons," Bess advised [Burghley] that there was a seminary about a mile from Hardwick, but that there was only one man of whom she was really suspicious. He had been Arbella's tutor for the past three and half years.
>
> Bess related to Burghley how, when they visited Chatsworth, this man, Morley-the-tutor, had told Arbella he wished to leave her employment. At first he attempted to get Arbella to give him an annuity, or a lease of land "worth L40 a year," alleging he was much penalised, financially and otherwise, by having left the university (Cambridge) to turn private tutor. Arbella said she could not oblige, so he went to Bess who listened stony-faced before she sent him away empty-handed. On the

following day Morley returned, telling Arbella he would work for no recompense if only he could remain in her employment. Ever practical, Bess was immediately suspicious of any man who offered to work for no money, especially following his remarks of the previous day. She was fair-minded, though, and admitted that she "could not accuse him of papistry."

As Arbella's tutor, Marlowe was in a position to provide useful inside information to Burghley about Arbella herself and what went on in the Hardwick household. Marlowe's need for financial help may have been spurred by the fact that Sir Francis Walsingham had died in 1590, in great debt, and that this source of income for Marlowe had ended. The Queen had expected Walsingham to finance his spy network out of his own pocket, which drove him into debt and his spies, after his death, without pay.

It is also likely that Burghley made use of Marlowe's talents as a poet. Burghley was most concerned that his granddaughters find husbands from good families with fine character. He had managed to have his daughter Anne marry one of his wards, the Earl of Oxford, Edward de Vere. But that marriage was not a happy one. No sooner was the marriage consummated than the Earl took off for Italy where he stayed from 1574 to 1576. He returned to England a Roman Catholic and estranged from his wife and father-in-law. From then on, Anne suffered miserably. Nevertheless, the marriage produced three daughters. She died in 1588.

It was the futures of these three girls that Burghley, as grandfather, was most concerned with. He very much wanted Elizabeth, the eldest, to marry the young, wealthy Earl of Southampton. The only trouble was that the earl was in no marrying mood. This was all taking place in 1590 when Marlowe's great talents as a poet were well known by Burghley. It is probable, and certainly possible, that he asked Marlowe to write a number of sonnets urging the young, handsome Southampton to marry. And the sonnets were produced, the first 17 of the 154 attributed to Shakespeare, who, by the way, is nowhere to be seen during this period. Here is sonnet 1:

From fairest creatures we desire increase,
That thereby beauty's Rose might never die,
But as the riper should by time decease,
His tender heir might bear his memory:
But thou, contracted to thine own bright eyes,
Feed'st thy light's flame with self-substantial fuel,
Making a famine where abundance lies,
Thyself thy foe, to thy sweet self too cruel.
Thou that art now the world's fresh ornament,
And only herald to the gaudy spring,
Within thine own bud buriest thy content,
And, tender churl, mak'st waste in niggarding.
Pity the world, or else this glutton be,
To eat the world's due, by the grave and thee.

Sonnet 3 is even more to the point:

> Look in thy glass, and tell the face thou viewest
> Now is the time that face should form another;
> Whose fresh repair if not thou now renewest,
> Thou dost beguile the world, unbless some mother.
> For where is she so fair whose uneared womb
> Disdains the tillage of thy husbandry?
> Or who is he so fond will be the tomb
> Of his self-love, to stop posterity?
> Thou art thy mother's glass, and she in thee
> Calls back the lovely April of her prime:
> So thou through windows of thine age shalt see,
> Despite of wrinkles, this thy golden time.
> But if thou live, remember'd not to be,
> Die single, and thine image dies with thee.

Sonnet 6 urges the young man to have as many as ten children. It reads in part:

> Ten times thyself were happier than thou art,
> If ten of thine ten times refigured thee:
> Then what could death do, if thou shouldst depart
> Leaving thee living in posterity?
> Be not self-will'd, for thou art much too fair
> To be death's conquest and make worms thine heir.

In Sonnet 10, Burghley, the earl's guardian, inserts his own emotional self when the poet writes:

> Make thee another self, for love of me,
> That beauty still may live in thine or thee.

The same theme is expressed in Sonnet 13:

> O, none but unthrifts: dear my love, you know
> You had a father; let your son say so.

Apparently, the sonnets had no effect, for the earl decided that he did not want to marry at all. But the existence of the sonnets bears witness to the relationship of the poet to Lord Burghley.

Even more indicative of the closeness of the relationship between Marlowe and Burghley is a bizarre incident which took place in January 1592. Marlowe had been sent on an intelligence mission to Flushing in the Netherlands. The nature of the mission has never been disclosed. However, the reason we know that he was in Flushing at the time is because of his arrest there as a counterfeiter and his deportation back to England on January 26, 1592.

The governor of Flushing, Sir Robert Sidney, younger brother of the deceased Philip, summed up the case in a letter to Lord Burghley. This letter came to light in 1976 as the result of searches by Professor Richard B. Wernham through the uncatalogued recesses of SP84—State Papers (Holland)—at the

Public Record Office. Here is that letter as reproduced in Charles Nicholl's *The Reckoning* (p. 235):

> Right honourable,
>
> Besides the prisoner Evan Flud, I have also given in charge to this bearer, my ancient, two other prisoners: the one named Christofer Marly, by his profession a scholar, and the other Gifford Gilbert, a goldsmith, taken here for coining, and their money I have sent over unto your Lordship.
>
> The matter was revealed unto me the day after it was done, by one Ri: Baines, whom also my ancient shall bring unto your Lordship. He was their chamber-fellow and, fearing the success, made me acquainted withal. The men being examined apart never denied anything, only protesting that what was done was only to see the goldsmith's cunning, and truly I am of opinion that the poor man was only brought in under that colour, whatever the intent of the other two had at that time. And indeed they do one accuse another to have been the inducers of him, and to have intended to practise it hereafter, and have as it were justified him unto me.
>
> But howsoever it happened, a Dutch shilling was uttered, and else not any piece. And indeed I do not think that they would have uttered many of them, for the metal is plain pewter and with half an eye to be discovered. Notwithstanding, I thought it fit to send them over unto your Lordship, to take their trial as you shall think best. For I will not stretch my commission to deal in such matters, and much less to put them at liberty and to deliver them into the town's hands. Being the Queen's subjects, and not required neither of this said town, I know not how it would have been liked, especially since part of that which they did counterfeit was Her Majesty's coin.
>
> The goldsmith is an excellent workman, and if I should speak my conscience, had no intent hereunto. The scholar says himself to be very well known both to the Earl of Northumberland and my Lord Strange. Baines and he do also accuse one another of intent to go to the enemy, or to Rome, both as they say of malice to one another. Hereof I thought fit to advertise your Lordship, leaving the rest to their own confession, and my ancient's report. And so do humbly take my leave. At Flushing the 26 of January 1592.
>
> Your Honour's very obedient to do you service,
>
> R. Sydney

This letter contains a wealth of information that will help us understand how Marlowe's life would be placed in mortal danger through the accusations of the same Richard Baines in 1593.

It is obvious that Robert Sidney knew who Marlowe was. He surely knew of his sister's coterie of poets and playwrights and of the formation of Pembroke's Men, which performed some of Marlowe's plays. Thus, the letter is simply a pro-forma narration of events as he understood them.

Needless to say, Marlowe was brought before Lord Burghley who must have asked his young friend, "What's this all about?" And Marlowe's explanation no doubt satisfied the elder statesman, who, as Elizabeth's treasurer, knew a great deal about coinage. After Elizabeth had become Queen, Burghley went to work to restore the debased coinage which the Queen had inherited from her sister. As a member of the commission appointed to supervise the Mint while the base

money was being converted, Burghley had expert help from Sir Thomas Gresham, from whom he learned the technicalities of high finance.

But what we learn from this incident is that Marlowe must have enjoyed a kind of father-son relationship with Burghley. If, as we have asserted, Burghley had known Marlowe since he was a page, and followed his career through Cambridge, and used him as a tutor for Arbella, and a writer of sonnets for Southampton, and as a reliable intelligence agent, his fatherly attachment to the young poet-playwright must have been at least as strong as it was to any of his wards.

In the Ten Precepts that Burghley addressed to his son Robert, there must have been some of the wisdom learned from his relationship with Marlowe, when he wrote:

> Be sure to keep some great man thy friend, but trouble him not for trifles. Compliment him often with many, yet small, gifts, and of little charge. And if thou hast cause to bestow any great gratuity, let it be something which may be daily in sight.

We can easily imagine Marlowe bringing back from some mission abroad a book or some other small gift for Walsingham and Burghley in gratitude for the support he was given by the most powerful men in the realm.

There is another factor to consider. By 1592, Burghley had given his son Robert Cecil ever greater responsibilities. Since it is highly probable that Robert had known Christopher at Cambridge, here was another connection which would work in Marlowe's favor, especially since Marlowe had become a successful playwright and had written of historical matters of particular interest to Burghley and son. The latter two must have found *Henry VI, Parts I, II, III*, most interesting because of their vivid, tumultuous story of royal succession, a subject they had to deal with in considering who would succeed Elizabeth, for Robert Cecil's future career depended on a smooth succession from Elizabeth to whomever would succeed her. And Marlowe's knowledge of history, royal politics, and Machiavellianism would be a very valuable asset to Robert in the future.

Thus, the friendship between Marlowe and Robert Cecil would be crucial in the events that would take place in 1593. And so, Marlowe emerged from this incident unscathed. It is probable that Robert Cecil and his father both questioned Marlowe about the counterfeiting incident and were quite satisfied with the playwright's explanation. But Marlowe's enemy, Richard Baines, would not rest until he had destroyed the poet for good.

28

Burghley and Son

An understanding of the relationship between Lord Burghley and his son, Robert Cecil, is crucial to understanding of what was going to happen to Marlowe in 1593. Not only was Burghley protective of his son, who was merely a year older than Marlowe, but he was grooming him to take his place in Queen Elizabeth's government. Grooming Robert became even more urgent when Walsingham died in 1590. According to Robert's biographer, Algernon Cecil, "Walsingham's work fell under two heads. There was, on the one hand, the conduct of English relations with foreign countries, and on the other the management of the famous spy service, which did more than anything else to preserve Elizabeth's life."

Burghley took control of the conduct of foreign affairs, and brought his son into the ever expanding bureaucracy of the foreign office, its confidential clerks, voluminous correspondence with diplomats and ambassadors, and formulation of foreign policy. He was also introduced into the secret world of espionage in which matters of plots and treason were part and parcel of the Secretary's work. Burghley stressed the importance of having the best intelligence possible. Algernon Cecil writes:

> There seems to have been few better methods of obtaining credit at Court, than the possession of reliable knowledge about the plans and machinations of the enemy. And when the whole future of the country, its religion, its independence, the relative stability of its government, might be said to hang on the slender thread of the Queen's life, the importance of that kind of information could hardly be exaggerated.

And only good spies, among whom was Marlowe, could get that kind of information. In other words, Marlowe was a valuable asset to Cecil, who needed that intelligence to move ahead of his rivals at Court.

When Walsingham died, a great many secret service agents found themselves stranded and payless. Some went to work under Burghley, who assumed control of Walsingham's spy network. The Earl of Essex saw the death of the Secretary as an opportunity to set up a secret service of his own, under the direc-

tion of Anthony Bacon, who had worked for years under Walsingham. Nicholas Faunt, an old and trusted friend of the Bacons, and cipher expert and forger Thomas Phelippes, joined the Essex group. However, Marlowe's loyalty to Burghley and Robert Cecil made it highly unlikely that he would ever join forces with Essex and the Bacons. Robert Cecil needed him, and Marlowe no doubt enjoyed his special status with the two most powerful men in Elizabeth's government. In the rivalry between Essex and Cecil, Marlowe knew where his loyalty and best interests lay.

Francis Bacon, Burghley's nephew and younger brother to Anthony, aspired to a high position in Elizabeth's government. He attached himself to Essex because Burghley would not favor him over his own son. When the position of Attorney-Generalship became vacant in 1593, Essex did all in his power to have Francis Bacon appointed by the Queen. But she was not pleased with a speech that Bacon had given in Parliament in opposition to the subsidies. And so she appointed the highly experienced Sir Edward Coke to the position, which infuriated Essex and greatly disappointed Bacon.

But there were other matters of importance that Burghley and his son had to deal with, namely the Puritan opposition to the Anglican Church. The Puritan movement was started by those Protestant ministers who went into exile when Catholic Mary assumed the throne in 1553 and began her persecution of Protestants, which resulted in the burning of some 300 as heretics, including Archbishop Cranmer, who had helped her father, Henry VIII, divorce her mother.

The exiles spent those five years of Mary's reign in the Reform states on the continent, and in particular in Geneva, where they absorbed the teachings of John Calvin and attended the simple congregational churches of which Calvin and other reformers were the architects. Gone were all the ornate trappings of the Catholic church, the incense, the Mass, the fancy surplices and square caps of the bishops, the "relics of Popery," etc. The worship of God was now made simple and pure, and the congregations controlled their churches under God's benign sovereignty. These were the churches which would one day flourish in the colonies of New England. Calvin had taught that the ruling sovereign was subordinate to God's sovereign rule, and thus his philosophy of government was considered a threat to the power of kings and queens.

When Elizabeth became queen after the death of her sister in 1558, the exiles began to return, expecting to transform the English church into its Genevan model. But they were sorely disappointed when Elizabeth, like her father, became head of the church and kept much of the ornamentation, ceremony and church hierarchy that reminded the exiles of the Catholic church. When Theodore Beza, Calvin's disciple, had the English situation explained to him by an embittered Puritan, he concluded that "the papacy was never abolished in that country, but rather transferred to the sovereign." And so, the exiles had a difficult choice: conform to what the Queen wanted and become part of the Anglican Church, or remain outside the state church and preach their Puritan doctrines wherever they could.

Thus, when Elizabeth ascended the throne, there were two religious factions she had to contend with: the Catholics and the Puritans. The foremost danger came from the Catholics, particularly when the Pope excommunicated Elizabeth in 1571 and told English Catholics that they no longer owed loyalty to their Protestant monarch. To Walsingham and Burghley this meant that all English Catholics were suspect. Their espionage network was expanded to monitor and uncover every Catholic plot against the Queen hatched in England and abroad. In that, they were eminently successful.

However, when it came to the Puritans, with whom both Walsingham and Burghley were in sympathy (Walsingham and Burghley's father-in-law had been exiles), the government was faced with a more difficult problem. When Henry VIII broke with the Church of Rome because the Pope would not sanction his divorce from Catherine, the issue was not liturgical. The church became the English national church with the sovereign instead of the Pope as its head. The reform of the church service and points of theology took place under Henry's son, Edward VI. The boy king had been greatly influenced by his Calvinist teachers and he approved of the reforms they wanted. Thus, the Book of Common Prayer, which replaced the Mass as the form of worship, was written, approved by Parliament, and adopted by the church.

The young king's protector, Edward Seymour, was instrumental in advancing ecclesiastical reform with a new set of Articles of Faith. Back in 1549, when Burghley was still William Cecil, he saw the need to check extremism. He approved the measures which freed Protestants from the threat of burning for heresy and execution for treason. The Uniformity Act of 1549 with its mild enforcement of the new Prayer Book satisfied the moderates. Cecil was cautious about the new world into which some of his reforming friends were struggling with imprudent haste. He preferred a gradual approach.

Meanwhile, by the 1560's and '70's, the Puritans had created a church within the church. Patrick Collinson in his book, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, writes (p. 45):

> Amongst these potential dissenters were several leading members of the English congregation in Geneva who lingered abroad, uncertain whether to support the new regime or to wait for a still more favourable day. They included the translators of the Geneva Bible, William Whittingham and his collaborators.... In October 1559 Knox was still advising his intimates that "we ought not to justify with our presence such a mingle-mangle as now is commanded in your kirks," while censuring those who stayed away "only for negligence." When they did reach England, the men of Geneva found that the advocacy of active resistance to the ungodly ruler in those political tracts of Knox and Christopher Goodman which had appeared from Geneva in 1558 had deprived them of any hope of influence under Queen Elizabeth.

The result was the creation of an underground church of Puritan preachers, known as "roving apostles." Collinson writes (p. 51):

> There were conferences of the preaching clergy devoted to systematic Biblical exposition. By the popular interest which they attracted and the indoctrination and

homiletical training which they offered to the more ignorant clergy, the prophesyings did more than any other agency to propagate and establish the new religion in Elizabethan England....

In the ranks of the "roving apostles," the parish lecturers and the town preachers, in their sermons, prophesyings, and psalm-singing, one can already trace the outline of a "church within the church," even before these activities attracted the unfavorable attention to those in authority.

"Prophesying," by the way, was a kind of Biblical conference derived from the example of many reformed churches on the continent. It was an academic exercise that replaced logical discourse as the means of schooling future ministers. It was based on a text from St. Paul: "Let the prophets speak two or three and let the other judge... For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted."

But it wasn't until the underground Puritan press began to publish satiric criticism of the established church, that the government began to feel the need to crack down on the dissenters. Nevertheless, the radical preachers had powerful friends in the hierarchy: the Earl of Leicester, the Earl of Bedford, Sir Francis Knollys, Sir Anthony Cooke (Burghley's father-in-law), Sir Nicholas Bacon, and others. They could protect some of the Puritans from prosecution, but they had no influence with Elizabeth herself.

In fact, the campaign against Puritan nonconformity began on January 25, 1565. Elizabeth had become alarmed at the increasing "diversity of opinions and specially in the external, decent, and lawful rites and ceremonies to be used in the churches." Burghley drafted the letter issued by the Queen, which was in effect a cautionary warning to his friends.

Only one prelate — Archbishop of Canterbury Grindal — ever dared to explain to the Queen's face that as a bishop of Christ's Church he was subject to a higher power, and the result was his suspension from office in 1577 and the loss of her favor. Of course, the very exalted position of the archbishop itself was anathema to the Puritans.

There was also the lunatic fringe among the Puritans to contend with. In October 1573, a young man of the Inner Temple, Peter Birchet, stabbed a man he thought was Sir Christopher Hatton, the Queen's favorite. He was arrested for murder and hanged a month later. But the Queen had wanted her government to find out "who had moved him to it." The incident led the Privy Council to set up a special commission to inquire into Puritan disobedience. Its procedures would be inquisitional. To escape this new-styled inquisition, some of the leaders escaped to the continent where they continued to publish their tracts. But for the time being, the Puritan movement in England lost its momentum.

However, it wasn't until the underground Puritan press published the sensational Martin Marprelate pamphlets that the government, in the person of Archbishop Whitgift, decided that enough was enough. He launched an all-out attack on the dissenters which sent some of the leaders to the gallows.

29

Martin Marprelate and John Penry

The Martin Marprelate tracts or pamphlets were the products of a highly organized effort among underground Puritan writers and their benefactors determined to sway the public against the Anglican Church, its Archbishop, and its episcopal hierarchy. The tracts, which began to be published in 1587, were witty, well written, satiric, and caustic. They were distributed and read throughout the kingdom causing increasing annoyance among the establishment.

The Puritans, in particular, had been going after the Church hierarchy for years. They wanted the positions of Archbishop and bishops abolished, intimating in 1574 that Archbishop Parker, the 70th Archbishop, might be the last. Parker had written a history of Britain's archbishops with his own biography at the end. The idea that he might be England's last archbishop was a theme nourished by the Puritans. They went so far as to produce their own annotated version of Parker's biography, written by an anonymous satirist, "with venom as well as wit," or by a syndicate of young satirists, printed overseas in 1574. Collinson writes (p. 146):

> In case the reader should miss the point, it was announced on the title-page: *This numbre of seventy is so compleat a number as it is great pitie ther shold be one more: but that as Augustin was the first, so Mathew might be the last.*

The Puritans themselves were somewhat divided as to what kind of church governance should replace the episcopalian setup of the Anglican Church. There were three possible choices of church governance: Episcopalian, which was the present form in England, Presbyterian, which John Knox established in Scotland, or Congregational, the church form adopted by Calvin and his followers in Geneva.

In Episcopalianism, the supreme authority is a diocesan, or regional, bishop. In Presbyterianism, the authority rests with a church council composed of representative presbyters, or elders. In Congregationalism it is the members of the

congregation assembled in church meeting who decide on all matters pertaining to the church. This is the form that was favored by the Puritans who migrated to North America. Thus, it may be said broadly, that in Episcopacy the government is monarchical; in Congregationalism, democratic; and in Presbyterianism, aristocratic or representative.

Archbishop Parker died in 1575. Born in 1504, he was sent in 1522 to Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, which Marlowe was to attend under a Parker scholarship in 1580. After receiving his M.A. in 1528, he came under the influence of the Cambridge reformers, and after Anne Boleyn's recognition as queen he was made her chaplain. In 1537 he was appointed chaplain to Henry VIII, and in 1544 he was elected master of Corpus Christi. In the following year he became vice-chancellor of the university. His Protestantism grew under Edward VI's short reign. He was a supporter of Northumberland who tried to prevent Mary from ascending the throne by sponsoring his son and Lady Jane Grey as the new king and queen. But Mary prevailed. Under the Catholic queen, Parker was deprived of his preferments but was not molested.

It was Elizabeth, on gaining the throne, who chose Parker to be Archbishop of Canterbury in 1559 because of his moderation, and probably also because he had been her mother's chaplain. With the return of the Marian exiles, Parker had to deal with Puritan opposition to the Anglican Church from the very beginning. In time, disputes about vestments expanded into a bitter controversy over the entire field of church governance. When he died in 1575, he lamented that Puritan ideas of governance would "in conclusion undo the queen and all others that depended upon her."

Parker was succeeded by Edmund Grindal who was Archbishop of Canterbury from 1576 to 1583. Born in 1519, Grindal was educated at Magdalene and Christ's Colleges, then at Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, where he graduated B.A. in 1538. He obtained his M.A. in 1541. He became one of Edward VI's chaplains after the boy king ascended the throne in 1547. In October 1552, he was one of the six divines to whom the Forty-two articles were submitted for examination before being sanctioned by the Privy Council. On Mary's accession in 1553, he abandoned his preferments and went into exile, making his way to Frankfurt. There he endeavored to reconcile the disputes between those who regarded the 1552 Prayer Book as perfect, and the Knoxians who wanted further simplification.

When Grindal returned to England in January 1559, he was appointed one of a committee to revise the liturgy. In July he was elected Master of Pembroke Hall and Bishop of London. His Puritan sympathies made him a lukewarm defender of Elizabeth's church.

In 1570, because of his inability to curb Puritan nonconformism in London, Grindal was removed to York, where Puritans were few and coercion would be required mainly against Roman Catholics. Upon Parker's death, Lord Burghley and Dean Nowell recommended Grindal for the archbishopric of Canterbury. The Queen appointed him Archbishop but wanted him to be more aggressive in

suppressing nonconformism. But his reluctance finally drove her to demand his resignation. However, he died in 1583 before he could officially resign.

The next man to become Archbishop of Canterbury, John Whitgift, was a man after the Queen's own heart. He was no pussycat when it came to defending Elizabeth's church and suppressing Puritan nonconformism. He was born in 1530, son of a prosperous merchant, and educated at St. Anthony's school in London, then at Queen's College, Cambridge, and finally at Pembroke Hall. There his preference for the reformed religion was confirmed. He received his M.A. in 1557. Throughout Mary's reign, Whitgift kept a low profile by concentrating on his studies.

Upon Elizabeth's accession, Whitgift finally felt free to enter the service of the church. He studied at Cambridge where Calvinistic views were in the ascendant. Throughout his career Whitgift subscribed to Calvin's theology, but not to his principles of church government. He became a defender of Anglican ritual and episcopal governance. This put him in immediate conflict with Thomas Cartwright, leader of the Calvinists at Cambridge, whose ouster he advocated in 1571 and succeeded in getting.

In 1572, two violent tracts, entitled "An Admonition to the Parliament," recommended reforming the church on presbyterian principles. Whitgift answered the "Admonition" in a pamphlet entitled "An Answere to a certain Libel...." Whitgift's argument was that the episcopal form of governance guaranteed law and order in the state. Cartwright wrote "A Replye...." Whitgift returned with a "Defense of the Answsere...." Cartwright answered with a "Second Replye" and "The Rest of the Second Replye." But Whitgift refused to engage in further argument.

In 1573 Whitgift was for a second time elected vice-chancellor of Cambridge University under Burghley who had been chancellor since 1559. In March of 1574 he preached about church government before the Queen at Greenwich, and his sermon was published. Two years later he was nominated to the bishopric of Worcester and was enthroned by proxy.

When Edmund Grindal died in July of 1583, Whitgift was nominated to succeed him. The *Dictionary of National Biography* (p. 132, vol. XXI) recounts:

> He was enthroned on 23 Oct. Unlike his three immediate predecessors—Cranmer, Parker, and Gindal—he took part in the ceremony in person instead of by proxy. His father had left him a private fortune, which enabled him to restore to the primacy something of the feudal magnificence which had characterised it in earlier days. He maintained an army of retainers.... His hospitality was profuse. His stables and armoury were better furnished than those of the richest noblemen. The queen approved such outward indications of dignity in her officers of state, and the friendly feeling she had long cherished for him increased after he was installed at Lambeth. She playfully called him "her little black husband," and treated him as her confessor, to whom she was reported to reveal "the very secrets of her soul." The whole care of the church was, she declared, delegated to him. She was frequently his guest at Lambeth, and until her death the amity between them knew no interruption.

No sooner was Whitgift installed than he began to plan his own little reign of terror against the Puritans. While the Roman Catholics were more of a political problem than a religious one, the Puritans represented a spiritual force capable of undermining not only the established Anglican Church but the very state iself.

His first step was to prohibit all preaching, reading or catechising in private homes and to forbid anyone to carry out church functions unless he subscribed to royal supremacy, followed the Book of Common Prayer and accepted the Thirty-nine Articles.

The high commission court was also granted greater powers. It was expanded to consist of forty-four commissioners with the power of discovering and punishing heretics and schismatics. A new procedure obliged a suspected minister to answer under oath whether he was in the habit of breaking the law, thus forcing the accused to testify against himself. This rankled Lord Burghley who complained to Whitgift that his anti–Puritan campaign "too much savoured of the Romish inquisition."

Leicester, a great friend of the Puritans, urged Whitgift to show greate moderation. But he refused. And in order to crush adverse criticism he cause to be passed in the high commission court in January 1586 the exceedingly severe Star-chamber decree, making public criticism virtually impossible. No manuscript was to be set up in type until it had been looked at and licensed by the archbishop or the bishop of London.

While the Puritans were exasperated by Whitgift's actions, they continued to defy him with their underground press. John Penry, a fiery young Puritan, arranged with his friends to secretly publish a series of attacks on the episcopate under the pseudonym of Martin Mar-Prelate. The chief target of the attack was Whitgift himself, who was called the "Beelzebub of Canterbury," "the Canterbury Caiaphas," "a monstrous Antichrist," and "a bloody tyrant."

Who was the defiant John Penry, willing to take on this powerful archbishop? A native of Wales, Penry was born in 1559, making him five years older than Marlowe. In 1580 he matriculated as a pensioner at Peterhouse, Cambridge. While at the university he read the works of Bishop Bale and Cartwright and adopted Puritanism in its most extreme Calvinistic form. He graduated B.A. in 1584 and subsequently studied at St. Alban Hall at Oxford where he got his M.A. in 1586. He preached at Cambridge and Oxford and in Wales where the spiritual destitution of the people compelled him to write a book describing the terrible ecclesiastical condition of the Principality. It was published in 1587. Its title more or less described what was needed: "A Treatise addressed to the Queen and Parliament containing the Aequity of an Humble Supplication in the behalfe of the countrey of Wales, that some order may be taken for the preaching of the Gospel among those people. Wherein is also set downe as much of the estate of our people as without offence could be made known, to the end (if it please God) that it may be pitied of them who are not of this assembly, and so they may be driven to labour on our behalfe."

For all intents and purposes, it was an attack on the church for its incompetence and neglect by the clergy. Whitgift was not at all pleased by the Treatise and pronounced Penry's opinions heretical. Penry was ordered to recant, but he refused and was sent to prison for twelve days. He asked for information about his offense, but was not told. A few days after his release he married Eleanor Godley of Northampton.

Penry's ordeal with Whitgift stirred Puritans all across the country. He decided that the only way to wage war effectively against the establishment was by way of the underground press and the publication of pamphlets critical of the Archbishop and the Anglican episcopacy. Penry had carefully studied the writings of Knox and Beza who had developed polemical theology into a high art. The joint writings of the group would bear the pseudonymous signature of Martin Mar-Prelate.

A printing press was purchased and delivered to a safe house, and the publishing venture began its notorious and historical operation. Within three weeks, the first of the Martin Mar-Prelate pamphlets were printed and circulated. The satiric attacks and ridicule were devastating. Whitgift and the commission were determined to find the culprits and put them out of business. He chose Dr. Richard Bancroft, a future archbishop, as chief agent in rooting out heresy. Bancroft commissioned writers Nashe, Greene, Munday and Lyly to write anti–Marprelate pamphlets.

The printing press had to be moved several times to avoid capture. In August 1589, the secret press was seized by the authorities. Suspicion fell on Penry. When John Udall, Penry's associate, was captured, much information about the publishing venture came to light, including Penry's direct involvement. To avoid capture, Penry and his wife escaped to Scotland where he was well received by the presbyterian clergy and preached in the churches.

In September 1592, when the Martin Marprelate controversy was subsiding, Penry returned to England and joined a congregation of separatists near Stepney. At first he was not molested. But in the following year, the vicar of Stepney recognized him, and on March 22, 1593 he was arrested. According to the DNB (Vol. 15, p. 794):

> Although the evidence in the possession of the authorities naturally suggested that he would be charged with complicity in the authorship of the Mar-Prelate tracts, no accusation was drawn up against him on that score. On 21 May 1593 he was put on his trial before the court of queen's bench, on a charge of having, while at Edinburgh, feloniously devised and written certain words with intent to excite rebellion and insurrection in England.... Despite the insufficiency of the evidence as set forth in these indictments, Penry was found guilty of treason and sentenced to death.

Penry immediately wrote letters to Burghley and Essex protesting the verdict. He said that he remained loyal to the Queen. Burghley had indeed saved other Puritans from the gallows, but he couldn't save Penry from Whitgift, who would not be moved. Penry had been convicted on May 21, two days after Marlowe's arrest on equally serious charges which no doubt alarmed Burghley and

Robert Cecil. But then something very strange happened concerning the date of execution. Author David A. More, editor of *The Marlovian*, in an Internet article on a site entitled Marlowe Lives! Association devoted to John Penry, provides the details:

On the 25th of May, sentence of death was formally pronounced. Family and friends showed up at the place of execution, but for some reason it was delayed, giving them hope, perhaps, that his sentence might be commuted or reversed. Her husband's banishment to Scotland would be like heaven to Eleanor Penry and her four small girls. But on May 29, Whitgift entered the council chamber with the Sirs John (Puckering and Popham, the Lord Keeper and Lord Chief Justice) to sign the warrant. "John Cant." Signed first.

Penry's first biographer, John Waddington, observed: "the instrument was sent immediately to the sheriff, who proceeded on the same day to erect the gallows at St. Thomas a Watering." This place of execution for the county of Surrey was located close to the second milestone on the Kent road, and near a brook dedicated to St. Thomas a Becket.

The execution was delayed for four days, which may have given Penry the hope that his letters to Burghley and Essex had resulted in a commutation of the sentence. He had hoped to be able to return to Wales and continue his much-needed work. But it was not to be. The Dictionary of National Biography relates that "while at dinner on May 29, John Perry was suddenly ordered to prepare for execution," and at five o'clock in the afternoon he was carted off to the gallows. William Pierce, in his life of Penry, provides a fascinating view of the macabre scene:

> In the midst of his meal, Penry without ceremony was hurried on to the hurdle and dragged to St. Thomas a Watering, where a gallows stood waiting its next victim. Having arrived there, Penry found no friend among the sprinkling of people who saw the grim cortege pass, and were drawn to the scene by their morbid curiousity. It was part of [Whitgift's] mean design to have none of the condemned man's friends present; and in any case, peremptory orders were issued to deny him the ordinary courtesy of the times, an opportunity at the gallows to bid farewell to the world, profess his innocence and loyalty.

Years later, an official version of Penry's tragic end was given by the chaplain of King Charles during the Stuart restoration. "Penry was executed with a very thin company attending on him, for fear the fellow might have raised some tumult either in going to the gallows, or upon the ladder" (Pierce, p. 480).

Of the pathetic scene at the hanging, John Waddington wrote: "Penry would have spoken, but the sheriff insisted, that neither in protestation of his loyalty, nor in the avowal of his innocence, should he utter a word. His life was taken, and the people were dispersed. The place of his burial is unknown" (p. 204).

Why these strange circumstances surrounding Penry's execution? Why do we not know where he was buried? Did it have anything to do with Marlowe's arrest two days before Penry's conviction? In the next chapter we shall see that the change in execution dates for Penry was, as unbelievable as it may seem, Burghley's means of saving the life of Christopher Marlowe.

30

The Plot to Save Christopher Marlowe

The events that led to the arrest of Christopher Marlowe on May 20, 1593 must be viewed in the context of what the political climate was like in London in that year. This was the time of Whitgift's inquisition in which his High Commission had acquired, with the Queen's approval, great intimidating powers. Otto Scott, in his biography of James I, describes the scene (p. 130):

> The sweep of the High Commission extended not only to canon law and ecclesiastical rules, but included "heretical opinions, seditious writings, contempts, conspiracies, false rumours, and slanderous words." This enormous net over the realm was cunningly crafted, and those who refused a summons to appear could be fined or jailed.... The Commission could summon, question, charge, convict, and punish and allowed no lawyers for the defense. Before Whitgift's commission even began, the Privy Council was deluged by complaints from the Church of England's ministers who could not subscribe to Whitgift's doctrines as laid down and who were already thrown out of their posts. Burghley and Walsingham, as well as the entire Reform element of the cities and countryside, were appalled.

Walsingham had been so outraged by Whitgift's actions that he urged the other members of the Privy Council to write reproving letters to the Archbishop. But the Queen let her councillors know that she approved of Whitgift's iron rule and appointed him to the Privy Council, the only instance in her reign in which a churchman had been appointed to the Council. This gave to the Archbishop even greater power.

The specific event that led to the unforeseen dangerous consequences for Marlowe was the Dutch Church libel, the nailing of a 53-line doggerel poem on the wall of the Dutch churchyard in Broad Street. It threatened the Dutch immigrants living in London with harm and violence if they did not leave. This was only one of a number of libels against the French, Dutch and Belgian immigrants which had started to appear on April 15, 1593. The writers demanded that the "strangers" leave the country within three months or suffer violence.

All of this was probably caused by the action of the House of Commons on March 21, 1593, extending the privileges of resident aliens. An important dissenting voice was that of Sir Walter Ralegh. Ralegh advocated their expulsion. He said:

> Whereas it is pretended that for strangers it is against charity, against honour, against profit to expel them, in my opinion it is no matter of charity to relieve them.... In the whole cause I see no matter of honour, no matter of charity, no profit in relieving them.

The Queen favored the legislation, and her ministers voted for it. However, when the libels began to appear, the Queen ordered an investigation, and the Privy Council set up a commission of five men to "examine by secret means who may be the authors of the said libels."

What was special about the Dutch Church libel is that it was written in iambic pentameter, signed Tamburlaine, and contained allusions to several of Marlowe's plays. Charles Nicholl speculates that all of this had to do with the fierce rivalry that existed between the Earl of Essex and Ralegh for the Queen's favor. The Dutch Church libel pointed a finger at Marlowe who supposedly shared with Ralegh atheist views. It is believed that the libel itself was written by Richard Cholmeley, one of Essex's servants. Nicholl writes (p. 300):

> The man most likely to be handling Cholmeley was Thomas Phelippes, the old Walsingham code-breaker who was now Essex's operational chief in secret matters. A little-known fact which now becomes significant is that Phelippes was a member of the special commission set up by the Privy Council to investigate the anti-Dutch libels.... He used forgery and fabrication to incriminate Babington, and through him, Mary Stuart. The campaign against Marlowe and Ralegh in 1593 has something of his trademark; his position on the secret commission gives him a logistical base; his role in the Essex retinue gives him the motivation.

It should also be noted that the Bacons, Anthony and Francis, were allied to Essex, and were competing with Robert Cecil for the highest positions in Elizabeth's government. Indeed, Essex was not too happy with Cecil's lack of support for Francis Bacon as the new Attorney-General when the post became vacant. Cecil and his father considered Bacon too young and inexperienced compared to Sir Edward Coke, the Queen's choice.

But for Essex the choice of Bacon was crucial in proving his power over the Queen. In a heated conversation with Robert Cecil on the matter, he said: "[F]or the Attorneyship for Francis is that I must have, and in that will spend all my power, might, authority and amity, and with tooth and nail defend and procure the same for him against whomsoever; and whosoever getteth this office out of my hands for any other before he have it, it shall cost him the coming-by" (Algernon Cecil, p. 81).

However, there was the post of Solicitor General, vacated by Coke, that had to be filled. Again, the Queen thwarted Essex and gave the position to Serjeant Thomas Fleming. It was difficult for Essex to live with these defeats. They also

undercut the confidence of his followers who were led to believe that he had more power over the Queen than he actually had.

Meanwhile, on May 11 the Council of the Star Chamber decided to take measures to counter the potential violence posed by the libels. The full text of the Dutch Church libel was believed lost until 1971 when it was found among the collection of Sir Thomas Phillipps. It begins with the threat of violence:

> Ye strangers yt doe inhabite this lande,
> Note this same writing doe it vnderstand.
> Conceit it well for savegard of your lyves,
> Your goods, your children, & your dearest wives

Then the writer makes an obvious reference to Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta:*

> Your Machiavellian Marchant spoyles the state,
> Your vsery doth leave vs all for deade
> Your Artifex, & craftsman works our fate,
> And like the Jewes, you eate us vp as bread

The next twelve lines describe how the immigrants sell their wares throughout the country, creating unfair competition with local merchants. The writer continues:

> Noe prize comes in but you make claime therto
> And every merchant hath three trades at least,
> And Cutthrote like in selling you vndoe
> Us all, & with our store continually you feast:
> We cannot suffer long.
> Our pore artificers doe starve & dye....

The libel then accuses the immigrants of causing increases in rents because so many of them are living in one house, dispossessing the natives. Again, the writer threatens violence and uses a reference to another play by Marlowe, *The Massacre at Paris.*

> Since words nor threates nor any other thinge
> Canne make you to avoyd this certaine ill
> Weele cutte your throtes, in your temples praying
> Not paris massacre so much blood did spill

Finally, the libeller accuses men in high places of corruption, which was no doubt meant to offend the men on the commission:

> With Spanish gold, you all are infected
> And with yt [that] gould our Nobles wink at feats
> Nobles said I? Nay men to be reiected,
> Upstarts yt [that] enjoy the noblest seates
> That wound their Countries brest, for lucres sake
> And wrong our gracious Queene & Subjects good
> By letting strangers make our harts to ake
> For which our swords are whet, to shedd their blood
> And for a truth let it be vnderstoode.
> Fly, Flye, & never returne.
> *Per.* Tamberlaine

The reference to Tamburlaine was obviously meant to point the finger at Marlowe. The entire libel was meant to provoke and outrage the Privy Council, which is exactly what it did.

Present at that Council meeting were: Archbishop Whitgift; the Queen's Chancellor and Keeper of the Great Seal, Sir John Puckering (also president of the Star Chamber); the Lord Treasurer, Burghley, and his son, Robert Cecil; the Earl of Derby; Lord Buckhurst; and Sir John Fortescue. They sent a letter to Sir Richard Martin and the aldermen of London, authorizing them to take far-reaching methods against anyone inciting the people to violence. They were particularly anxious to capture the culprit who wrote that provocative libel:

> There have bin of late divers lewd and mutinous libells set up within the citie of London, among the which there is some set uppon the wal of the Dutch Churchyard that doth exceed the rest in lewdness, and for the discouerie of the author and publisher thereof hir Maiesties pleasure is that some extraordinarie paines and care be taken by you commissioners appointed by the Lord Mayor for th' examining such persons as maie be in this case anie way suspected. Theis shalbe therefore to require and aucthorize you to make search and apprehend euerie person so to be suspected, and for that purpoze to enter into al houses and places where anie such maie be remayning. And, uppon their apprehancion, to make like search in anie the chambers, studies, chestes, or other like places for al manner of writings or papers that may geue you light for discouerie of the libellers. And after you shall haue examined the persons, if you shal finde them dulie to be suspected, and they shal refuze to confesse the truth, you shal by aucthoritie hereof put them to the Torture in Bridewel, and by the extremitie thereof, to be used at such times as often as you shal think fit, draw them to discouer their knowledge concerning the said libells [Wraight, p. 235].

And so, the search for the author of the Dutch Church libel went on with great vigor. Suspicion fell on playwright Thomas Kyd who had shared his rooms in Norton Folgate with Marlowe two years earlier. Why was a finger pointed at him? Probably because he had been working on a play with several collaborators about Sir Thomas More, the Sheriff of London who had figured prominently in the riots against foreign immigrants. The theme of public dissatisfaction with the aliens seemed to the writers to be a relevant subject at the time. But the play failed to pass the censor because of its controversial subject.

The collaborators included Anthony Munday, Thomas Heywood, Henry Chettle, Thomas Dekker, and Thomas Kyd. There was also a sixth collaborator who has never been identified. Shakespeareans believe the sixth collaborator was Shakespeare. But there is no proof of that. Also, Henslowe's diary is full of such literary collaborations by the known writers of the time, and the name Shakespeare is nowhere to be found.

Thomas Kyd's rooms were searched, and the searchers found among Kyd's papers a manuscript copy of a treatise on the beliefs of a heretic known as Arrian. It had been published in 1549 as *The Fal of the Late Arrian* by John Proctor, and dedicated to princess Mary Tudor before she became queen. A.D. Wraight writes (p. 238):

> It was this paper that the eye of the commissioner lighted upon. What was this? Heresy? Atheism? A find indeed! In vain poor Kyd attempted to explain, protesting that the papers belonged not to him but to Marlowe, and that they had apparently been "shuffled with some of myne (unknown to me) by some occasion of or wrytinge in one chamber twoe years synce." His story was not believed. He was arrested and marched off to Bridewell under the authority of the order of the Star Chamber, and there put to the torture.

Apparenty, Kyd, under torture, denied that he was an atheist, but told his interrogators all he knew about Marlowe, accusations which he later spelled out in a letter to Puckering and enumerated in a Note that could be used in an indictment of Marlowe on charges of atheism, blasphemy, etc. And so, on May 18, 1593, the Privy Council issued a warrant of arrest and the apprehension of Marlowe who, at the time, was living at the home of Thomas Walsingham at Scadbury in Chiselhurst. It reads:

> Warrant to Henry Maunder one of the Messengers of her Majesty's Chamber to repair to the house of Mr. Thomas Walsingham in Kent, or to any other place where he shall understand Christopher Marlow to be remaining, and by virtue hereof to apprehend and bring him to the Court in his company. And in case of need to require aid.

Maunder showed up at Scadbury, and Marlowe duly accompanied him to the Court in London, made his appearance and was immediately released on bail. The document of release reads:

> This day Christofer Marley of London, gent. Being sent for by warrant from their Lordships, hath entered his apparance accordinglie for his Indemnity herein; and is commanded to give his daily attendance on their Lordships, until he shall be lycensed to the Contrary.

It was obvious to Burghley and his son that fellow Councillor Puckering was out to get Marlowe, and that their best intelligence agent was in trouble and somehow had to be saved from a Star Chamber inquisition. If Marlowe was found guilty of the charges against him, he would be hanged. It was probably also recognized by Burghley and Robert that the case against Marlowe was designed by the Earl of Essex to undermine Burghley and son, for if Marlowe were put to the torture, there is no telling what he might be forced to reveal about Burghley, Robert Cecil, and Ralegh. Essex was capable of doing anything he could think of to destroy his rivals for political power.

It also appears that Puckering was a follower of Essex's, "an old association which went back to his days on the Council of the Marches, and which was to assist in creating personal difficulties between the Lord Keeper and the embattled Lord President Pembroke [Mary Sidney's husband]" (Roy Kendall, p. 303).

To augment his case against Marlowe, Puckering decided to use Kyd's statements about Marlowe as well as evidence procured from a group of sleasy informers, including Richard Cholmeley, Thomas Drury, and Richard Baines.

An indictment of Marlowe could also lead to an indictment of Ralegh,

Essex's arch rival for the favor of the Queen. Indeed, Ralegh and his circle would be investigated after the supposed conviction and execution of Marlowe.

In any case, Marlowe's arrest and release on bail gave Burghley, Robert Cecil, and Thomas Walsingham little time in which to protect Marlowe from the gallows. However, they were aided by the fact that in the ten days following Marlowe's appearance at the Star Chamber on May 20, the Privy Council met only three times—on the 23rd, 25th, and 29th.

Whose idea it was to stage a phony death for Marlowe, we do not know. But it may have been the inventive Marlowe himself or perhaps Robert Cecil who had become adept in the spy business with its phony identities and passports. Walsingham's men would carry out the phony murder, substitute Penry's body for Marlowe's, and send off Marlowe to wherever Burghley and Robert wanted him to go under a new identity. All of this could be done in Deptford where Burghley maintained a safe house for the spy network and where the Queen's coroner, William Danby, could perform the inquest because Deptford, some three miles on the Thames south of London, was in the verge, since the Queen would be in Greenwich.

And so the faked murder was planned to take place at the house of Eleanor Bull, widow, at Deptford Strand. Charles Nicholl did extensive research on Eleanor Bull, discovering that she was "a woman of substance, well-born and well-connected, not at all the shabby old ale-house keeper she is often portrayed as." Nicholl also discovered an interesting connection with Burghley. "There is a point at which family connections grow tenuous, but technically speaking Eleanor Bull was related to Lord Burghley, the Lord Treasurer of England...." Nicholl concludes (p. 37):

> Marlowe died not in a tavern or bawdy-house, but in the house of a local official's widow. His hostess was a woman of standing, both by birth and marriage. She was someone who could call on court connections if she needed, someone who might serve court connections if they needed.

Deptford, it should be noted, was also the home port of the Muscovy Company, also known as the Russia Company. It was founded in 1555 by a group of investors as a joint-stock company and chartered by the Privy Council. Among the earliest investors were Lord Burghley and Sir Francis Walsingham. Its purpose was to promote trade with Russia and Asia and sponsor maritime explorations.

In his book, *The Early History of the Russia Company,* T. S. Willlan writes (p. 254):

> In December 1593 Christopher Baker was authorized to receive into the storehouse at Deptford "of Mr. Marloe, merchaunte agent of the Muscovy House," 44 cables which had been ordered by Sir John Hawkins and the Lord Admiral.

Apparently, not only was Deptford a very busy place for the Muscovy Company, but it appears that a distant relative of Christopher's, Anthony Marlowe, was merchant agent of the company. In fact, he served in that capacity from 1576

to 1599. Also, Walter Marlowe, Anthony's uncle, was a charter member of the company. And it also appears that Eleanor Bull's late husband, Richard Bull, who died in 1590, worked for Christopher Browne, another of Anthony Marlowe's relatives. He supervised Bull's work as a clerk of the Greencloth, whose duty it was to receive all goods destined for the Queen's royal household.

Thus, Eleanor Bull's house was more than just a safehouse for Burghley's secret agents. It was also an office for the Muscovy Company. Was Marlowe acquainted with the activities of the Company and its affairs in Russia? It has been conjectured that Marlowe may have used Ivan the Terrible (1530–1584) as his model for Tamburlaine. Ivan's conquests had expanded Russia into Siberia and he was known as a cruel tyrant. He was given to fits of rage, in one of which he killed his eldest son. In Marlowe's play, Tamburlaine kills his effeminate son.

It is doubtful that anything at the Muscovy Company had any bearing on the events involved in Marlowe's faked death. But we can be sure that this gathering of four of Burghley's secret agents at Deptford was not a social event.

In any case, the timing for the phony murder was crucial. It had to be coordinated with the hanging of John Penry, whose body was going to substitute for Marlowe's. That hanging took place on May 29, 1593, at St Thomas a Watering, three miles from Deptford, and Marlowe's supposed murder took place the very next day at Deptford, enough time for Penry's body to have been moved to Eleanor Bull's house in preparation for the Coroner's inquest. It should be noted that it was probably Burghley or Robert Cecil who managed to delay Penry's hanging so that it could coincide with what was planned at Deptford.

The Coroner's Inquest is undoubtedly the most important document in this whole plot. It describes the circumstances in which Marlowe was "murdered," and obviously does not describe what actually took place at Mrs. Bull's house. Since the murderer and witnesses were all Walsingham's men, their job was to create a plausible scenario that would lead to the acquittal of the murderer as having acted in self-defense. And that's what the Coroner's Inquest tells us. This Inquest was discovered by the indefatigable Elizabethan scholar J. Leslie Hotson of Harvard in 1925 while searching through the Public Record Office in London. It is a handsome document written in impeccable Latin by a professional scribe. Here is the English version, interspersed with this writer's comments:

> Kent. Inquistion in duplicate taken at Detford Strand in the aforesaid county of Kent within the verge on the first day of June in the thirty-fifth year of the reign of Elizabeth, by the grace of God Queen of England, France & Ireland, defender of the faith, etc., in the presence of William Danby, gentleman, coroner of the household of our said lady the Queen, in view of the body of Christopher Morley, there lying dead & slain, upon the oath of Nicholas Draper, gentleman, Wolstan Randall, gentleman, William Curry, Adrian Walker, John Barber, Robert Baldwyn, Giles Feld, George Halfpenny, Henry Awger, James Batt, Henry Bendyn, Thomas Batt senior, John Baldwyn, Alexander Burrage, Edmund Goodcheepe & Henry Dabyns....

None of these sixteen witnesses to the coroner's inquest had ever known Marlowe or Penry and thus were in no position to certify the identity of the corpse they were looking at. They were individuals with good reputations in their communities. They were yeomen, land-owners, wharf-owners, bakers, a grocer, a miller.

> Who say upon their oath that when one Ingram Frysar, late of London, Gentleman, and the aforesaid Christopher Morley and one Nicholas Skeres, late of London, Gentleman, and Robert Poley of London aforesaid, Gentleman, on the thirtieth day of May in the thirty-fifth year above mentioned, at Detford Strand aforesaid in the aforesaid County of Kent within the verge, around the tenth hour before noon of the same day met together in a room at the house of one Eleanor Bull, widow and there passed the time together and lunched, and after lunch kept company quietly and walked in the garden belonging to the aforesaid house until the sixth hour after noon of the same day, and then returned from the aforesaid garden to the room aforesaid and there together and company dined....

What was Marlowe and two of Walsingham's servants doing in Deptford, spending a full day in idleness and hours walking in a garden (who spends hours walking in a garden?), at a seaport where Burghley's spies conveniently went abroad and returned and could freshen up at Eleanor Bull's safe house before making their way to London? They were joined that day by Robert Poley who had just returned from Holland. Shouldn't Marlowe have been at Scadbury, available for appearance at the Star Chamber in London at a moment's notice?

> and after dinner the aforesaid Ingram and Christoper Morley were in speech and exchanged divers malicious words because they could not concur nor agree on the payment of the sum of pence, that is to say, *le recknynge*, there....

Why this fuss over a bill that was either to be paid by Walsingham or Burghley? The four men were there on some sort of "business." So the idea that there would be a dispute between Ingram and Marlowe over the bill is preposterous. But it provides a pretext for what was to happen soon afterward:

> and the aforesaid Christopher Morley then lying on a bed in the room where they dined and moved with anger against the aforesaid Ingram Frysar because of the aforesaid words that had passed between them, And the aforesaid Ingram then and there sitting in the aforesaid room with his back towards the bed where the aforesaid Christopher Morley then lying, near the bed, that is sitting *nere the bed* and with the front part of his body toward the table and the aforesaid Nicholas Skeres and Robert Poley sitting on either side of the same Ingram so that the same Ingram Frysar could in no way take flight, thus it befell that the aforesaid Christopher Morley suddenly and of malice aforethought towards the aforesaid Ingram then and there drew the dagger of the aforesaid Ingram which was at his back, and with the same dagger the aforesaid Christoper Morley then and there gave the aforesaid Ingram two wounds on his head of the length of two inches and of the depth of a quarter of an inch; whereupon the aforesaid Ingram, in fear of being slain and sitting on the aforesaid bench between the aforesaid Nicholas Skeres and Robert Poley, so that he was not able to withdraw in any way, in his own defense and to save his life then and there struggled with the aforesaid Christopher Morley to take

back from him his aforesaid dagger, in which same affray the same Ingram could not withdraw from the aforesaid Christopher Morley.

Picture this unlikely situation: Marlowe is lying on a bed behind the backs of three men seated at a table. They are facing no one. Usually when several men are seated at a table conversing, dining, or playing backgammon with one another, they sit facing each other. They would not all be seated on one side of the table facing the air. And when Marlowe stole the knife from Ingram's back, did he then stand up and cut Ingram's head with the knife, which Ingram then grabbed out of Marlowe's hand, turned around and stabbed Marlowe in the eye? Why would Marlowe have tried to kill Ingram Frysar over a silly dinner bill? And if he really wanted to kill Frysar, why didn't he stab him in the back? And why did Skeres and Poley do nothing to subdue Marlowe and help Ingram? If ever there was a phony scenario, this was it. What these men were probably doing in that room was preparing Penry's body for the inquest. And what they probably did the night before was bring Penry's body in a cart to the Bull house from the gallows at St Thomas a Watering, three miles away. It is even probable that Marlowe was not there at all since the dead Penry would be used as his stand-in.

And thus it befell in that affray that the said Ingram, in defense of his life and with the aforesaid dagger of the value of 12 pence, gave the aforesaid Christopher then and there a mortal wound above his right eye of the depth of two inches and of the breath of one inch, of which same mortal wound the aforesaid Christopher Morley then and there instantly died.

There have been comments made by physicians that a wound such as the one described in the inquest would not kill a man. It would simply damage brain tissue as in a prefrontal lobotomy.

And thus the aforesaid Jurors say upon their oath that the aforesaid Ingram killed the aforesaid Christopher Morley the aforesaid thirtieth day of May in the thirty fifth year abovementioned in the aforesaid Detford Strand in the aforesaid county of Kent within the verge in the room aforesaid within the verge in the manner and form aforesaid in defense and for the salvation of his life, against the peace of the said lady the Queen, her present crown & dignity. And further the said Jurors say upon their oath that the said Ingram after the slaying aforesaid perpetrated & done by him in the manner & form aforesaid neither fled nor withdrew himself. But concerning what goods or chattels, lands or tenements the said Ingram had at the time of the aforesaid slaying done & perpetrated by him in the manner & form aforesaid, the said Jurors are totally uninformed. In witness whereof the aforesaid Coroner as well as the Jurors aforesaid to this Inquisition have in turn set their seals. Dated the day & year abovementioned, etc.
by William Danby
Coroner

And so, with Christopher Marlowe pronounced officially dead, the case pending against him at the High Commission was closed. As for the body, it was taken after the inquest from Eleanor Bull's house to the church of St. Nicholas

and buried there in an unmarked grave. The church records state that the body was Christopher Morley's. But it was undoubtedly Penry's.

On Thursday, June 28th, just four weeks after the events in Mrs. Bull's house, the Queen issued a formal pardon of Ingram Frizer for having murdered a man in self-defense. The case was closed.

Where did Marlowe, with a new identity, go after May 30, 1593? Did he go to France? Did he go to Scotland? It can be assumed that he continued to work for Burghley and Cecil in whatever capacity they thought necessary. What is known is that plays continued to be written, which is the best proof we have that Marlowe did not die as reported on May 30, 1593. Nor is it likely that the man William Shakespeare, who supposedly inherited Marlowe's mantle, was a writer since there is no evidence to confirm such a career for the gentleman from Stratford-upon-Avon.

31

The Plot to Destroy Christopher Marlowe

The complex chain of events that ended at Deptford can be said to begin with the Bacon brothers, Anthony and Francis, who were frustrated and disappointed with their uncle Burghley's reluctance, if not unwillingness, to promote Francis to a high position in Elizabeth's government. Burghley wanted his own son Robert Cecil to become Secretary of State, the position held by Sir Francis Walsingham until his death in 1590. Besides, Burghley, a religious family man, probably knew and disapproved of his nephews' sexual proclivities which he probably regarded as a liability when it came to government positions of high responsibility.

Burghley had enjoyed a close friendship with their father, Sir Nicholas Bacon, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, until the latter's death in 1579. Burghley, Bacon and Walsingham were the solid trio who protected Queen Elizabeth from her enemies. Lady Ann Bacon, nee Cooke, Bacon's second wife, was the sister of Burghley's second wife, Mildred. Thus, with such intimate connections, it is easy to understand why Anthony and Francis expected almost as much from Burghley as they would have had from their own father. And, in fact, Burghley did help Francis obtain some very good but minor government assignments. However, in reality, the two brothers were their own worst enemies, and their failures could not be blamed on Burghley.

Anthony, born in 1558, was three years older than Francis, born in 1561. Both brothers were the issue of their father's second marriage and thus had six siblings from their father's first marriage. Ann Bacon gave her sons the best education available in England. Both were privately tutored, attended Trinity College at Cambridge and Gray's Inn where their father had been treasurer. Both had been groomed for careers in law.

In 1576, Francis, at age 15, was sent abroad to assist Amias Paulet, the Queen's ambassador at Paris. There Francis met Thomas Bodley, an elite spy, gathering information for the government. Francis was expected to report to

Bodley on whatever he found in his travels. In later years Bodley was to become librarian at Oxford where he founded the Bodleian library. It was also at the embassy that Francis learned how to cipher and use cryptography. He became friends with Thomas Phelippes, a servant of Walsingham's, who had been sent to France to provide the ambassador with the exceptional skills he had in languages and ciphering.

Lisa Jardine and Alan Stewart, in their biography of Francis Bacon, write (pp. 55–57):

> Working for Walsingham throughout the 1580s on the continent, notably Paris, he [Phelippes] became one of the most important personal centres of English intelligence.... What Francis learned from Thomas Phelippes remained with him for the rest of his life.... Francis was also entrusted with bringing messages to the Queen. The mission had to be strictly confidential — even the identity of the messenger needed to be kept secret.... Clearly, the bearer needed to be someone well educated, well informed, trustworthy, and intimately acquainted with the business of the embassy.

On February 20, 1579, Nicholas Bacon, Lord Keeper, died. Francis immediately returned to England only to find to his distress that his father had made provisions for each of his children, except Francis, having died before he could finish the task. Thus, Francis was left in the position of having to earn a living in order to sustain the lifestyle he had become accustomed to. And that is why he needed a patron, such as his uncle. But uncle Burghley's focus was on his own son who needed all the support he could get from his father.

And that is why Bacon turned to the Earl of Essex, the Queen's current favorite. While the Earl was intelligent and well educated, he was certainly in need of the lucid advice and council that only a Francis Bacon could provide. In gratitude, the Earl was willing to go to any length to get Francis the position he wanted in Elizabeth's government — the attorney generalship. In *Hostage to Fortune: The Troubled Life of Francis Bacon*, we read:

> Though dynastically well placed, Bacon's prospects were obstructed throughout his career by Sir Robert Cecil, the equally ambitious son of his mother's sister, Mildred Cooke, wife of Lord Burghley. Francis hedged his bets between the two factions which between them controlled the Elizabethan court in the 1570s—the Cecils and Essex. His preferred champion, the Earl of Essex, was charismatic, charming and well educated — the kind of man for whom throughout his life Francis Bacon had a weakness. But this flamboyant patron with whom Bacon threw in his lot increasingly publicly was, in matters of state, headstrong and reckless, regularly ignoring the measured advice offered by those whose causes he supported, in his dealings with the Queen.

Meanwhile, Anthony, in December 1579, twenty-one years of age, ten months after his father's death, left England with uncle Burghley's recommendation. He was accompanied by two menservants. He quickly established himself as a very capable intelligence gatherer, taking instructions from Burghley and Walsingham. It was through Walsingham that Anthony became a lifelong

friend of Nicholas Faunt's, one of Walsingham's personal secretaries, who carried post between Anthony and Walsingham. It was Faunt who provided Anthony with news of what was going on with his mother at Gorhambury and brother Francis.

Anthony stayed on the continent, mainly in France, for twelve years, during which time he met eminent intellectuals, sent numerous reports to Burghley and Walsingham, became a friend of Henri of Navarre, and got into trouble in Montauban in the summer of 1586, where he was charged with sodomy with a page and in danger of being executed. However, it was Henri of Navarre who came to his rescue and got him released. But it was this incident which would haunt him for the rest of his life, not knowing who in England — the Queen or Burghley — knew of the charges.

There was also the matter of Anthony's recurring illnesses which required medication. Both Francis and Anthony came to rely heavily on "physic-opiates" for relief, which led to a mild opiate addiction.

Anthony finally returned to England in February, 1592. He was met by his friends Thomas Lawson and Nicholas Faunt, who brought him a letter from his mother. A room at Gray's Inn had been prepared for him by Francis.

Meanwhile, Francis had gone about helping Essex create his own intelligence network. Walsingham's death had left many of his intelligence-gatherers unemployed, and Francis began to recruit some of them into Essex's service, including Thomas Phelippes who brought members of his own network to work for Essex. And when Anthony returned to England, Francis lost no time in recruiting his brother. Alison Plowden writes in *The Elizabethan Secret Service* (pp. 115–116):

> Anthony Bacon had been captivated at first sight by the "rare perfections and virtues" of this handsome, courteous young nobleman and longed for an opportunity to show the Earl how much he honoured and esteemed his excellent gifts, how earnestly he desired to deserve his good opinion....
>
> This then was Anthony's chance. While brother Francis acted as Essex's political counsellor, he let Anthony take over responsibility for foreign affairs and re-activate the networks that had been allowed to languish since Walsingham's death.... If, with the Bacons' help, the Earl of Essex could begin to acquire the reputation for omniscience which had done so much for Francis Walsingham, it must increase his prestige and give him the right to be regarded as a serious character. For the Bacons, of course, the scheme offered an opportunity not to be missed for undermining the power of the Cecils.

Meanwhile, Robert Cecil was using his own network of intelligence gatherers to provide him with important information. Among them was experienced Christopher Marlowe. It is not known whether or not Marlowe had been approached and asked to desert the Cecils for Essex. But clearly, Marlowe owed too much to Burghley to even contemplate such disloyalty. Besides, what Marlowe needed was time to write and the means to earn Burghley's continued support.

Another good reason for Marlowe to have avoided having anything to do with the crowd at Essex House was its reputation. Jardine and Stewart write (p. 17):

> [T]he exclusively male, intense and passionate forms of service which surrounded Essex, in which both Anthony and Francis Bacon were implicated until the death of the earl, could readily be represented in a less respectable light as a world rife with male sexual intrigue and sodomy. Lampoons, letters and intelligence reports from the period contain frequent suggestions that one or other of the rising young men is involved in some homosexual sexual liaison or other. A few — Anthony Bacon among them — actually found themselves brought to court for alleged sodomitical activity.

There was another matter that drove the emotionally unstable Essex mad with the desire to destroy: Sir Walter Ralegh, whose relationship with the Queen he could hardly tolerate. Using some of the more unsavory characters at Essex House, he or Phelippes or all of them combined came up with a plan that would undermine the Cecils and destroy Ralegh. They would use an attack against Marlowe that would lead to an investigation of Ralegh for atheism by Whitgift's inquisition. The Bacon brothers knew Whitgift well, having lived with him when they were students at Trinity College.

The rash of threatening libels nailed to the immigrant churches in London in April of 1593 provided the opportunity. In early May, the 53-line doggerel poem signed Tamburlaine was nailed to the wall of the Dutch churchyard. As we wrote in the previous chapter, Cholmeley, one of Essex's men, probably wrote the libel to implicate Marlowe. No doubt, Burghley, Robert Cecil and Marlowe quickly realized what the Essex people were up to: creating a situation in which the Cecils and Marlowe would be discredited and using Marlowe to open the way to an investigation of Ralegh for atheism.

It required quick thinking on the part of the Cecils and Marlowe to find a way to thwart the Essex-Bacon plan. It was Thomas Walsingham's loyal friendship with Marlowe and his continued loyalty to Burghley that made the faked murder possible.

Charles Nicholl, in *The Reckoning*, devotes an entire chapter to exploring in great detail how Essex's secret operatives concocted the plan. A letter from one of them, Thomas Drury, to Anthony Bacon in August 1593 indicates that Anthony was quite aware of what was going on. The operatives included Thomas Drury, Richard Cholmeley and Richard Baines, whose "Note" provided the most damning evidence against Marlowe. Nicholl writes (p. 310):

> This document, which has perplexed and scandalised Marlowe's biographers for centuries, tells us nothing for certain except that Richard Baines wished to accuse Marlowe of heresy. That is all we can be sure of: its motive, which is to incriminate, to make Marlowe a criminal....
>
> There is one other curiosity about the Baines "Note" that needs looking into: its timing. As already noted, the contemporary evidence is contradictory. There are two copies of the "Note." One is almost certainly autograph. The other is an official copy, smartly written in scribal hand....

> ...There are a few minor variations in the text, but it is otherwise a verbatim copy. After the copy was made, however, someone went through it, writing fast and in a slapdash hand, and made certain editorial changes to the text. Some of these are unimportant, but three passages are deleted entirely. The first is Marlowe's famous quip about loving tobacco and boys. The second is the paragraph about coining: Marlowe's statement about his "right to coin" and about his acquaintance with Poole at Newgate. Thirdly, the whole of the last paragraph is deleted: this is Baines's conclusion, summarising Marlowe's attitude, promising to bring witnesses forward, and so on. The effect of the corrections seems to be to concentrate on the purely religious aspects of Marlowe's unorthodoxy. Related subversions—sexual, criminal—are no longer considered relevant.

Baines, of course, was the same character who turned Marlowe in the year before for coining in the Netherlands. He obviously had no love for Marlowe. Burghley dismissed the charge, and Marlowe went free. Should anyone have believed Baines? He was one of the more unsavory characters in the spy business, which depended greatly on unsavory characters to do much of the dirty work. Walsingham had hired him in the great struggle against Catholic intrigue and used him as a double-agent.

Richard Baines was of an older generation than Marlowe's. He had attended Christ's College at Cambridge in 1568, and in 1573 moved to Caius, a Catholic stronghold. He received his MA in 1576. Two years later he enrolled at the Catholic seminary at Rheims, France, the same seminary that Marlowe would visit ten years later. Nicholl describes what life was like at the seminary (p. 123):

> The seminarists wore black gowns and unicorn hats, attended divinity lectures, subsisted on simple fare ... and contemplated the murals of blessed martyrdom painted on their chamber-walls. It was an intensely tight-knit community. These were young men a long way from home, surrounded by hostile locals, and steeped in a fanatical ideal of devotion and sacrifice: "soldiers of Christ."

On September 21, 1581, Baines was ordained as a full priest. But apparently he had been sent to Rheims as a double-agent, with the intention of destroying the seminary. He hoped to find confederates among the scholars by sowing discontent and talking about "flesh pies and carnal delights." He revealed his plan to a fellow-seminarian whom he tried to recruit by promising a very generous payment from Walsingham. But the seminarian took all of this to Dr. Allen, the head of the college. Baines was arrested on May 28, 1582. A year later, on May 13, 1583, Baines wrote and signed a detailed, six-page confession, which he wrote in exchange for his release. It revealed his nefarious plans to destroy the seminary, including a plan to poison its water-supply.

Equally interesting is what the confession revealed about Baines's personality. He believed that there was a "devil" within him driving him to do terrible evil. He confessed that he "delighted in profane writers, and the worst sort of them, such as either wrote against the truth, or had least taste of religion" (Nicholl, p. 128). Nicholl writes (p. 129):

> Suddenly the young Catholic stands before a doctrinal abyss of doubt and rejection. "Proceeding farther and farther in wickedness," he "began to mock at the lesser

> points of religion." From there he went on to "utter divers horrible blasphemies in plain terms against the principal points of religion." In all this he tried to influence the other seminarists, "by arguments and often communications."

Nicholl then offers a fascinating and plausible speculation:

> The extraordinary thing about this part of Baines's confession is its closeness to that other product of his pen, the "Note" on Marlowe.... This immediately throws new light on the Baines "Note." In one sense, it makes it more psychologically complex.... He was, on the evidence of the confession, far *closer* to Marlowe than we have realised. He has travelled down this "highway to heresy." Yet it also makes the "Note" more questionable as an indictment of Marlowe.

In other words, Baines may have been writing more about himself than Marlowe. For, how well could he have actually known Marlowe and his religious beliefs? Burghley and Walsingham knew Marlowe much, much better, and that is why Burghley and son took the risk of staging a phony murder to save him.

But there is another aspect of Baines's six-page confession that Nicholl seems to have missed. A full copy of that confession, translated from the original Latin, was published in Roy Kendall's *Christopher Marlowe and Richard Baines, Journeys through the Elizabethan Underground*, published in 2006. Kendall states that the Latin original "has never been printed in any Marlovian context," and that he "located the original text, had it translated from the Latin, and printed it in full" in his book. In that confession there is not only a detailed account of Baines's horrible sins, but a recantation and a solemn pledge of loyalty to the Roman Catholic Church. He avers (p. 28):

> Now therefore I shall make reparation to God's Church as far as I am able and call the Holy Trinity and all those in heaven to witness that by this retraction, which I confess to have written by my own hand, in all things I cling to and believe the holy, Catholic, apostolic and Roman Church and that I submit myself to that supreme governor of it, our most holy master Gregory XIII, Christ's highest minister on earth. And also I detest, execrate, reject and abjure from my mind all heresies, schisms and sects, especially the heresies of Luther and Calvin and all others to which I seemed to join by my own will, in that I was wont to be familiar with new men and enemies of the true religion. I testify by God and the holy mother Church that no longer do they wish me saved or pardoned by divine mercy in that I strive for and defend with all my power and faith, handed down by our forefathers, which the aforesaid apostolic chair promotes and teaches.
>
> Given in my chamber at Rheims on 13 May 1583 in the presence of Thomas Bailey, priest, Humphrey Ely, doctor of law and Seth Foster, priest.
>
> I acknowledge that this is my retraction. Richard Bainy, priest.

Baines's retraction was made eleven months after his incarceration, during which time he undoubtedly underwent a profound change of heart. But his pledge to "detest, execrate, reject, and abjure" all heresies meant that he would do all in his power to silence and destroy such "heretics" as Christopher Marlowe, whose anti–Catholic play, *Massacre at Paris*, must have rankled Catholic Baines.

Apparently, Walsingham and Burghley discounted Baines's return to his Catholic faith and believed that his recantation was merely a means of getting out of the Seminary, for they continued to use him. One can imagine that Burghley suspected something wrong when Baines accused Marlowe of counterfeiting and decided to give the suspected double, now triple, agent his walking papers. How Baines then became involved in writing his damning Note against Marlowe is interesting.

Constance Kuriyama tells us in *Christopher Marlowe: A Renaissance Life*, that Kyd, under torture, had said enough about Marlowe so that "Puckering smelled blood in the water, and consequently prodded Kyd to provide more specific information about Marlowe's opinions and associates" (p. 145). Kyd did indeed provide Puckering with the information he wanted, information that later wound up in Baines's famous Note.

How did Baines becoming involved? Kuriyama writes (p. 146):

> Drury, we will recall, was an associate of Richard Cholmeley whom Cholmeley managed to have arrested in July 1591. In late 1592 Drury, who was still in prison, or back in prison, was recruited by Lord Backhurst and Puckering to perform certain unspecified services for them, evidently intelligence related.

Lord Puckering released Drury from prison on the proviso that he find Baines and bring him to the Privy Council, which Drury proceeded to do. With Baines in hand, Puckering instructed him to compose a strong incriminating Note, based on Kyd's revelations, that could be used to convict the great poet and playwright. Undoubtedly Baines complied with Puckering's request with great relish.

Apparently, Burghley and son knew enough of what Puckering was planning to have felt a great sense of urgency. They had to move fast to thwart the Lord Keeper, and they succeeded in carrying out one of the greatest and most unbelievable feats of escape in all of history.

Nicholl believes that Marlowe was indeed murdered. But those of us who believe otherwise have the greatest proof of all: the plays that were written after Marlowe's supposed death, plays and poems that could not have been written by anyone else.

Did the Bacon brothers know what Puckering had been planning and how the Burghleys solved the problem? There is evidence that Anthony's close friend Nicholas Faunt was at Dover on May 30, 1593, when the phony murder took place and Marlowe may have gone from Deptford to Dover to embark on a ship to France. It is probable that Marlowe's Canteburian compatriot would have been happy to know that the poet had escaped the Star Chamber's inquisition.

Also, it is hard to believe that either Anthony or Francis would have wanted so great a genius like Marlowe to be executed for "heresy." Anthony had barely escaped the hangman's noose at Montauban, and Francis was too much of an independent, fair-minded intellectual to have enjoyed seeing Marlowe hanged.

Apparently, events that started with the Dutch Church libel, spun out of

control, and ended in near tragedy. Marlowe continued to live and write the greatest literary works in the history of civilization. The Earl of Essex continued to lead an anti–Cecil faction until 1601 when he rebelled against the Queen, was prosecuted by his former friend Francis Bacon, and beheaded for treason. Anthony Bacon died shortly thereafter, but Francis went on to greater heights under James I, became Attorney-General in 1613 and Lord Chancellor from 1618 to 1621. A Parliamentary committee found him guilty of corruption and he was sent to the Tower. But James, who recognized and admired Bacon's great intellect, pardoned him. Bacon has been proposed as the true author of the works attributed to Shakespeare, but he died in 1626, three years after the publication of the First Folio, about which he said nothing.

32

Enter William Shakespeare

The name William Shakespeare enters the annals of literature for the first time with the publication of the poem *Venus and Adonis* in London in 1593. Although the poem was registered with the Stationers Company anonymously on April 18, 1593, it wasn't published until September 22, 1593, four months after Marlowe was pronounced dead. That is the publication date accepted by Prof. Leslie Hotson in *Shakespeare's Sonnets Dated.* The name William Shakespeare does not appear on the title page, but at the end of a dedication to the Earl of Southampton, the Right Honorable Henry Wriothesly, then 20 years of age. It reads (in modern spelling):

> I know not how I shall offend in dedicating my unpolished lines to your lordship, nor how the world will censure me for choosing so strong a prop to support so weak a burden: only, if your honour seem but pleased, I account myself highly praised, and vow to take advantage of all idle hours, till I have honoured you with some graver labour. But if the first heir of my invention prove deformed, I shall be sorry it had so noble a god-father, and never after ear so barren a land for fear it yield me so bad a harvest. I leave it to your honourable survey, and your honour to your heart's content; which I wish may answer your own wish and the world's hopeful expectation.
>
> Your honour's in all duty,
> William Shakespeare

Note that Shakespeare refers to the poem as his "first heir of my invention." No mention of all the plays attributed to him by future biographers which he was supposed to have written before 1593. And that is because they cannot square their fictional biographies with the actual chronology of events. And all of this disjointed biographical fantasy is based on the misinterpretation of what Robert Greene wrote in 1592 about the Shake-scene. Greene was not referring to William Shakespeare the unknown writer but to Edward Alleyn, the great actor and true shake-scene of his time. Greene knew Alleyn very well. He never knew or heard of someone named William Shakespeare.

And because orthodox Shakespeareans are reluctant or simply unwilling to

believe that their interpretation of Greene's reference to Shake-scene is in error, they are forever stuck in a false chronology that is forever confusing and untenable. Once you rely on a chronology based on established fact, as we have done in this book, it is possible to sort out historical fact from historical fiction.

Did William Shakespeare actually write *Venus and Adonis*? It certainly is not the work of an unknown beginner. It was written by someone intimately acquainted with Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, which points us directly to Marlowe himself who actually translated Ovid and was a great admirer of the Roman poet's works.

And while we believe that Marlowe wrote *Venus and Adonis* as well as *Hero and Leander*, which was published in 1598, the really tantalizing question is who was William Shakespeare, where did he come from, and why was he chosen to write that dedication to the Earl of Southampton?

Whether it was Thomas Walsingham, Lord Burghley or Robert Cecil who arranged with Richard Field, printer, and John Harrison, publisher, to have the poem sold to the public, the reason for doing so is fairly obvious: to make money. Harrison was a highly reputable publisher and member of the Stationers' Company. He may have known who registered the poem in April of 1593. As for Richard Field, he was from Stratford-upon-Avon, born in 1561, the son of Henry Field, a tanner and friend of John Shakespeare. In 1579, at the age of 18, Richard migrated to London and became apprenticed to a printer who taught him the trade. Was Field's migration to London the inspiration for Shakespeare doing likewise in 1593 or so? And did Shakespeare go to Field for advice on how to find work and a place to stay in the great city? And who chose William Shakespeare to front for the true author of this great poem? It is significant that Shakespeare's name did not appear on the title page but only on the dedication page. Was this done to make sure that no one would associate the work with Marlowe? There was gossip about Marlowe's demise in London, and it was essential to give the public no reason to suspect that Marlowe was not dead.

But what about this unknown entity William Shakespeare? E. A. J. Honigmann, in his book, *Shakespeare: The "Lost Years,"* writes (p. 1):

> Where was William Shakespeare in the "lost years" before 1592, and how did he make a living? Apart from the records of his baptism (26 April 1564) and license to marry (27 November 1582), and of the christening of his children, Susanna (26 May 1583) and the twins Hamnet and Judith (2 February 1585), the rest is silence.

But Honigmann is one of the biographers who believe that Greene was referring to Shakespeare in his reference to a Shake-scene in his *Groatsworth of Wit*, published posthumously by Chettle in 1592. That error has caused a total confusion in the chronology of the plays.

Neilson and Thorndike write in their book, *The Facts About Shakespeare* (p. 20):

> The record of the baptism of Shakespeare's only other children, the twins Hamnet and Judith, in February, 1585, practically exhausts the documentary evidence concerning the poet in Stratford until 1596....

> Meanwhile, he was gaining a footing as an actor. The accounts of the Treasurer of the Chamber for March 15, 1594–95, bear record of Shakespeare's having been summoned along with Kempe and Burbage, as a member of Lord Chamberlain's Company, to present two comedies before the Queen at Greenwich Palace in the Christmas season of 1594. This is the earliest mention of the poet as sharing with his company a kind of recognition as honorable as it was profitable.

Meanwhile, in 1594, the poem *The Rape of Lucrece* was printed by Richard Field with a dedication to the Earl of Southampton signed by William Shakespeare. Again, it was another Marlowe work that was published to make money. It became very popular and appeared in eight editions by 1655. Henrietta C. Bartlett writes in her book, *Mr. William Shakespeare, Original and Early Editions of His Quartos and Folios* (p. 7):

> This is the second work issued by Shakespeare and appeared in 1594 with a dedication, signed in full, to the same Earl of Southampton to whom he had dedicated *Venus and Adonis* the previous year. It is interesting to note the change in the tone of the dedication from the formal address of the earlier work to the warm friendly tone of this one.

Here is that second dedication:

> The love I dedicate to your Lordship is without end; whereof this pamphlet, without beginning, is but a superfluous moiety. The warrant I have of your honourable disposition, not the worth of my untutored lines, makes it assured of acceptance. What I have done is yours; what I have to do is yours; being part in all I have, devoted yours. Were my worth greater, my duty would show greater; meantime, as it is, it is bound to your Lordship, to whom I wish long life, still lengthened with all happiness.

It is still the dedication of a novice writer. Shakespeare's name is not on the title page, but on the dedication. It was printed by Richard Field for John Harrison. But who actually wrote the dedication? It should be noted that in the struggle between Essex and the Cecils for power, the Earl of Southampton had gone over to Essex's side, even though he had been a ward of Lord Burghley's.

John Michell writes in *Who Wrote Shakespeare* (p. 52):

> In 1593 a long, passionate, classically refined poem, *Venus and Adonis*, was dedicated in the name of William Shakespeare to the nineteen-year-old Earl of Southampton. The following year a second poem, *The Rape of Lucrece*, was similarly dedicated. Southampton made no acknowledgments and, despite ardent scholarly researches, there is no hint of evidence that he ever had any connection with William Shakspere.
>
> In 1598 the name Shakespeare or Shake-speare began appearing on the title-pages of plays, many of which had previously been published anonymously. These works were famous and highly praised, yet their nominal author remained obscure. No literary people — with the exception of Ben Jonson — ever claimed to have known him. His only known associates were his Stratford neighbours and, in London, crooked businessmen and theatre folk

Of *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*, Gerald Eades Bentley writes in *Shakespeare: A Biographical Handbook* (p. 149):

> Both texts are much more free from error than those of any other printed works of Shakespeare, an indication that for them he carefully read proof, though he never did so for the printed texts of any of his plays.

Perhaps the reason why these two texts were virtually error-free is because they were provided directly to the printer and that Shakespeare's name was appended to the dedications so that the true author of the poems would not be identified as Marlowe, who actually knew Southampton from his days at Cambridge. Concerning Shakespeare's relationship with Southampton, Bentley writes (p. 150):

> Actually the only evidence that exists to show that Shakespeare ever had anything to do with Southampton or ever sought patronage from him exists in the dedications of the two poems in 1593 and 1594.... [A]fter this there is no clear evidence of any relationship between the two men at all.

In any case, up to 1594, Shakespeare's name appears on no plays. He is known only as a poet. When it comes to the plays, we enter a world of conjecture and guess work as to when the plays attributed to Shakespeare were written. We believe that those plays attributed to Shakespeare in the early 1590s and those in the First Folio written after Marlowe's supposed death in 1593 were indeed written by Marlowe in his new station in life.

How do we know? It was Edward Blount, Marlowe's close publisher friend who was also a friend of the Walsinghams, who was the prime mover of the First Folio enterprise. Obviously, he knew the true author of the plays and where to find them. Indeed, twenty of the plays had never been published, and some of them were never staged. Where did he find them, let alone know they even existed? Shakespeare had died in 1616, but Marlowe no doubt was still alive when the First Folio was published. Shakespeare's manuscripts, we are told, were without blemish, probably because Marlowe's originals had been transcribed by a professional scribe.

The first time Shakespeare's name appears on a play is in 1598 on a quarto publication of *Love's Labour's Lost*, four years after his name appeared on *The Rape of Lucrece*. What do we know about Shakespeare during those four years? According to Eric Sams in *The Real Shakespeare* (p. 225): In December of 1594, "Willm. Kempe, Willm. Shakespeare, and Richarde Burbage, servants to the Lord Chamberleyne" are paid twenty pounds for "several comedies" acted before the Queen. Two years later, in November of 1596, "Rolls of the Queen's Bench in London record that a William Wayte craves sureties of the peace against William Shakespeare 'for fear of death and so forth.'" So we know that Shakespeare was an actor working with Kempe, the great comedian, and Burbage, another great shake-scene, who played many of the leading roles.

On May 4, 1597, Shakespeare bought New Place, the second largest house in Stratford. While his father's fortunes were in decline, son William was becoming rich from whatever he was doing in London. We surmise that Shakespeare had agreed to front for plays written by someone else for a price. He probably

didn't know who the true author was and probably didn't want to know. He was probably told that the author was a nobleman who did not want his identity to be known.

In November of that year tax collectors for the ward of Bishopsgate in London listed Shakespeare as failing to pay a tax of five shillings before leaving the area.

The year 1598 saw the building of the Globe theatre at Southwark and the publication of Sir Philip Sidney's collected works by Richard Field. It also saw the publication of Francis Meres' *Palladis Tamia, Wits Treasury* which may explain why Shakespeare had become rich enough to purchase New Place.

In September 1598, Francis Meres (1565–1647), an obscure English clergyman who had obtained an M.A. at Cambridge in 1591, published a book called *Palladis Tamia. Wits Treasury,* described by Bentley as:

> A fat little volume of over 600 pages into which he gathered hundreds of commonplaces—similes, allusions, anecdotes, quotations—all classified into subject sections: God's Providence, The Justice of God, Preachers, Sermons, Parents, Women, Virtue, Gluttony, Riches, Braggarts, Memory and more than a hundred other categories.

But what is of particular interest to us is that he wrote a "Comparative Discourse of our English poets with the Greeke, Latin, and Italian poets." In that Discourse he mentioned virtually every English poet, including Philip Sidney, Spencer, Drayton, Warner, Marlow, Chapman, Roydon, Watson, Kid, Greene, Peele, Jonson, Nash, Heywood, Chettle, and Shakespeare. His reference to Shakespeare is why this book is considered so important to Shakespeare scholars and biographers. He wrote:

> As the soule of *Euphorbus* was thought to live in *Pythagoras:* so the sweet wittie soule of *Ovid* lives in mellifluous & honytongued *Shakespeare,* witness his *Venus and Adonis,* his *Lucrece,* his sugred Sonnets among his private friends, &c.
>
> As *Plautus* and *Seneca* are accounted the best for Comedy and Tragedy among the Latines: so *Shakespeare* among y' English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage; for Comedy, witnes his *Ge'tleme' of Verona,* his *Errors,* his *Love labors lost,* his *Love labours wonne,* his *Midsummer night dreame,* & his *Merchant of Venice* : for Tragedy his *Richard the 2. Richard the 3. Henry the 4. King John, Titus Andronicus* and his *Romeo and Juliet.*
>
> As *Epius Stolo* said, that the Muses would speake with *Plautus* tongue, if they could speak Latin: so I say that the Muses would speak with *Shakespeares* fine filed phrase, if they would speake English.

So we know from Meres that twelve plays which he attributes to Shakespeare were performed and published in spurious, pirated, unauthorized editions. Since all but one was published in the First Folio, we can assume that they were all Marlowe's work. The one play that scholars have pondered over is *Love labours wonne,* which some scholars have speculated may actually be *The Taming of the Shrew* or *Much Ado about Nothing* under an earlier title.

Although Meres attributed the twelve plays mentioned in *Palladis Tamia*

to Shakespeare, only one of them, *Love's Labour's Lost,* had been published in quarto in 1598 with the author's name on the title page:

> A Pleasant Conceited Comedie Called, Loves labors lost. As it was presented before her Highnes this last Christmas. Newly corrected and augmented by W. Shakespeare. Imprinted at London by W. W[hite]. For Cutbert Burby. 1598.

This play could only have been written by someone familiar with university life and the humor and wit of scholars. It has Marlowe's fingerprints all over it. We shall discuss the contents of the play in another chapter.

Titus Andronicus was first published in quarto in 1594 with the following title page:

> The Most Lamentable Romaine Tragedie of Titus Andronicus: As it was Plaide by the Right Honourable the Earle of Darbie, Earle of Pembroke and Earle of Sussex their servants. London, Printed by John Danter, and are to be sold by Edward White & Thomas Millington, at the little North doore of Paules at the signe of the Gunne. 1594.

None of the subsequent quartos of this play, 1600 and 1611, mention the author. *Richard II* was first published in quarto in 1597 without the author's name. Its title page reads:

> The Tragedie of Richard the second. As it hath beene publikely acted by the right Honourable the Lorde Chamberlaine his Servants. London. Printed by Valentine Simmes for Androw Wise, and are to be sold at his shop in Paules church yard at the signe of the Angels. 1597.

The quarto of 1598 and subsequent quartos include "By William Shakespeare."

Richard III was first published in quarto in 1597 without the author's name. Its title page reads:

> The Tragedy of King Richard the third. Containing His treacherous Plots against his brother Clarence : the pittiefull murther of his innocent nephewes : his tyrannicall usurpation : with the whole course of his detested life, and most deserved death. As it hath beene lately Acted by the Right Honourable the Lord Chame-laine his servants. At London. Printed by Valentine Sims, for Andrew Wise, dwelling in Paules Church-yard at the Signe of the Angels. 1597.

A quarto of *Henry IV* was published in 1598 with no author's name. The title page reads:

> The History of Henrie the fourth; With the battell at Shrewsburie, between the King and Lord Henry Percy, surnamed Henry Hot-spur of the North. With the humorous conceits of Sir John Falstalffe. At London, Printed by P. S[hort]. For Andrew Wise, dwelling in Paules Churchyard, at the signe of the Angell. 1598.

The quarto of 1599 adds: "Newly corrected by W. Shakespeare. At London, Printed by S.S[tafford] for Andew Wise...." All subsequent quartos repeat, "Newly corrected by William Shake-speare."

Romeo and Juliet was first published in an unauthorized quarto in 1597. Bartlett writes:

> It was first printed anonymously, in 1597, in a pirated edition with a very defective text; it was undoubtedly stolen from the managers of the Globe Theatre, who were the owners, instead of being purchased in the regular way.

The title page of that quarto reads:

> An Excellent conceited Tragedie of Romeo and Juliet. As it hath been often (with great applause) plaid publiquely, by the right Honourable the L. of Hunsdon his Servants. London, Printed by John Danter. 1597.

In 1599 a good, authentic text was issued which was followed in all later quartos. The title page of the 1599 quarto reads:

> The Most Ex-cellent and lamentable Tragedie, of Romeo and Juliet. Newly corrected, augmented, and amended: As it hath bene sundry times publiquely acted by the right Honourable the Lord Chamberlaine his Servants. London Printed by Thomas Creede, for Cuthbert Burby, and are to be sold at his shop near the Exchange. 1599.

Note the absence of Shakespeare's name. Nor is his name on the quarto of 1609, which was printed for John Smethwick. Nor is his name on a subsequent undated quarto, also printed for John Smethwicke. However, another undated quarto printed for John Smethwick does have Shakespeare's name as author, as well as the quarto of 1637 published after the First Folio.

Both *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Merchant of Venice* were first published in quarto in 1600 with Shakespeare's name as author. Three plays, *Gentlemen of Verona, A Comedy of Errors,* and *King John,* were never published in quarto. Their texts appear for the first time in the First Folio of 1623.

What all of this tells us is that Meres was able to gather information about Shakespeare's plays from already published sources and non-published sources. He knew something about the "sugred sonnets" circulating among his private friends. The following year saw the publication of an anthology of poetry. Its title page reads:

> The Passionate Pilgrime. By W. Shakespeare. At London. Printed for W. Jaggard, and are to be sold by W. Leake, at the Grey-hound in Paules Churchyard. 1599.

Henrietta Bartlett comments:

> The volume contains the first appearance in print of two of Shakespeare's Sonnets which had been mentioned the year before by Meres as his "sugred Sonnets among his private friends." These were reprinted as Nos. 138 and 144 in the *Sonnets*, 1609.
>
> *The Passionate Pilgrim* also contains three poems by Shakespeare which appeared in *Loves Labors Lost*, 1598. The rest of the book comprises poems by Marlowe, Raleigh, Griffin and others, all entered anonymously.

A 1612 quarto of *The Passionate Pilgrim* created a bit of a stir between an author and publisher. The title page reads:

The Passionate Pilgrime. Or Certaine Amorous Sonnets, between Venus and Adonis, newly corrected and augmented. By W. Shakespeare. The third Edition. Where-unto is newly added two Love-Epistles, the first from Paris to Hellen, and Hellens answere backe againe to Paris. Printed by W. Jaggard. 1612.

Bartlett comments (p. 10):

The addition of the epistles from Paris and Helen, which were really by Thomas Heywood, moved that poet to an outburst of wrath against Jaggard which appeared in "An Address to the Printer, Nicholas Okes" in the *Apology for Actors*, 1612. Jaggard was so far affected that he removed Shakespeare's name from the title-page of *The Passionate Pilgrim* leaving the space blank, there is no other difference in the titles.

What is interesting in all of this is that prior to 1598, Shakespeare's name appears on no quarto of any play. Then, suddenly, in 1598 Shakespeare's career as a playwright is given a great boost by Francis Meres and his name begins to appear on quartos of plays. Could the reason for this be that Lord Burghley died on August 5, 1598, at age 77, thus signalling a new policy regarding the publication of Marlowe's plays under Shakespeare's imprint? Indeed, the publication of Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* in 1598 may provide the answer to that mystery.

33

Hero and Leander

The most important literary event of 1598 was not Meres' *Palladis Tamia*, but the publication of Christopher Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*, one of the most exquisite romantic poems in the English language. According to A.D. Wraight, the unfinished poem was written during Marlowe's last stay at Scadbury Manor, the home of Thomas Walsingham. She writes (p. 243):

> Far away from the stench of London's plague-infected streets in the quiet of his patron's home at Scadbury, surrounded by Kentish woodlands and meadows, and the apple orchards in bloom in May, Christopher Marlowe was composing a poem. Wrapt in the inspiration of his Muse, he was creating a work of exquisite delicacy and unabashed sensuality based on the story of the star-crossed lovers of the Hellespont, Hero and Leander.... He left only the first two sestiads completed, but these stand apart as one of the most perfect poetic achievements of the entire Elizabethan age. With their posthumous publication Marlowe's reputation amongst his contemporaries rose to even greater heights than before.

Apparently the events at Deptford interrupted Marlowe's completion of the poem. That it was published six years after his supposed departure from life was probably due to the need to maintain secrecy among those involved in saving Marlowe. By 1598, those who would have testified against Marlowe, Thomas Kyd and Richard Baines, were dead. Also, the Essex challenge to Robert Cecil had been quashed. The Bacon brothers were up to their ears in debt, and Essex himself was in trouble with the Queen. The lack of money spelled the end of the Essex intelligence network. Meanwhile, the prospects for Walsingham were on the rise. The Queen had visited Scadbury in 1597, during which she made Thomas, Sir Thomas. During the entire Essex escapade, Walsingham had remained loyal to Lord Burghley, Robert Cecil, and Christopher Marlowe.

But what is of the greatest interest is the fact that the unfinished poem was published by Edward Blount and dedicated to Sir Thomas Walsingham, Marlowe's patron. It reads:

> To the Right Worshipful,
> Sir Thomas Walsingham, Knight.

> Sir: we think not ourselves discharged of the duty we owe to our friend when we have brought the breathless body to the earth; for albeit the eye there taketh his ever farewell of that beloved object, yet the impression of the man that hath been dear to us, living an after life in our memory, there putteth us in mind of farther obsequies due unto the deceased. And namely, of the performance of whatsoever we may judge shall make to his living credit, and to the effecting of his determinations prevented by the stroke of death. By these mediations (as by an intellectual will) I suppose myself executor to the uphappily deceased author of this poem, upon whom knowing that in his lifetime you bestowed many kind favours, entertaining the parts of reckoning and worth which you found in him, with good countenance and liberal affection: I cannot but see so far into the will of him dead, that whatsoever issue of his brain should chance to come abroad, that the first breath it should take might be in the gentle air of your liking; for since his self had been accustomed thereunto, it would prove more agreeable and thriving to his right children than any other foster countenance whatsoever. At this time seeing that this unfinished tragedy happens under my hands to be imprinted, of a double duty, the one to yourself, the other to the deceased, I present the same to your most favourable allowance, offering my utmost self and ever to be ready, at your worship's disposing.
>
> Edward Blount

There is no doubt that the posthumous publication of *Hero and Leander* was meant to rehabilitate Marlowe's reputation as a poetic genius and a human being. It was also meant to generate revenue for Marlowe's clandestine upkeep. We don't know how or where Marlowe was living. Was he living at Walsingham's estate? Was he still traveling on missions for Robert Cecil?

Blount tells us that he is the "executor to the unhappily deceased author of this poem." He was probably also the liaison between Marlowe and the actor Shakespeare at the Globe Theatre where the plays were being performed. No one, including Thomas Walsingham, Lord Burghley, Robert Cecil, or Edward Blount, could have foreseen how prolific a playwright Marlowe would continue to be. But arrangements had to be made to get this steady stream of plays on the stage. They could not possibly be attributed to him, since the people involved in the plan to save him could be greatly compromised. Robert Cecil's future career with the new monarch depended on maintaining the strictest secrecy. He was also in a position to make good use of Marlowe's skills as a spy, using whatever identity that fitted the mission.

In fact, there has been much speculation about one "Willm Halle," who was on Cecil's payroll. According to the *Shakespeare Conspiracy* by Phillips and Keatman (p. 159):

> On 2 October 1601 a "Willm Halle" is mentioned by the Secretary of State's clerk as having returned with intelligence from Denmark. This presents another possible link to Shakespeare. *Hamlet* was written around 1601 (it was registered in 1602) at about the same time that Hall returned from Denmark.

Indeed, "Willm Halle" might very well have been Marlowe under one of his many disguises. Also, since we believe that it was Marlowe who wrote

Hamlet, it is more plausible that "Willm Halle" would have been Marlowe rather than Shakespeare. In any case, there is no evidence anywhere that Shakespeare traveled to Denmark or was involved in Cecil's spy network.

During his lifetime Shakespeare maintained a prudent silence about the source of the plays he was bringing to the Globe Theater. Although some of the plays were published in quarto with his name on them, they were not authorized by Shakespeare or the Globe Theatre. They were all pirated editions.

As for Marlowe's unfinished poem, we read in an Introductory Note to a Scolar Press Facsimile of *Hero and Leander* published in 1973:

> The work was entered in the *Stationers' Register* to John Wolf on 28th September 1593, but from the evidence of the earliest surviving text published by Edward Blount, it did not appear in print until 1598. Blount's edition contains Marlowe's work only, but later in the same year Paul Linley published Marlowe's poem together with the continuation by George Chapman. It seems that the section by Marlowe in Linley's edition was set from a copy of Blount's edition.

The poem became enormously popular with editions appearing in 1600, 1606, 1609, 1613, 1617, 1622, 1629 and 1637. Obviously, this erotic, romantic poem was capable of generating a good deal of money for the publisher and anyone else involved. A.D. Wraight describes *Hero and Leander* as "the most luscious piece of love poetry which the Elizabethan age produced, and dealing with the wooing of two virgin lovers of classical Greece."

The first edition of 1598, published by Blount, contains only the first two Sestiads written by Marlowe. The Linley edition adds four additional Sestiads written by George Chapman and dedicated to Lady Walsingham, wife of Sir Thomas, whom he identifies as "one of the Ladies of her Majesties Bed-Chamber." The Walsinghams were about as close to the Queen as one could get. The Queen actually and privately visited the Walsinghams at Scadbury in 1597. Wraight writes (p. 250):

> Lady Audrey Walsingham's name does not appear in any Court references until 1599, but from then on regular mention of her in association with Sir Thomas Walsingham in the giving and receiving of New Year's gifts to and from Queen Elizabeth is recorded. In the New Year's Gifts List of 1599–1600 Sir Thomas Walsingham is linked with "the Lady Walsingham Junior" in giving the Queen "parte of a petty cote of clay-color satten, embroidered all over with branches of silver. Delivered to the Robes." In return Lady Walsingham received twenty-seven and a half ounces of gilt plate, and Sir Thomas likewise.

Thomas Walsingham also enjoyed a close relationship with Lord Burghley and his son Robert. Which is why Burghley, Robert Cecil and Walsingham were able to collaborate so effectively in their very daring plan to save Marlowe. Burghley provided the substitute body with that of John Penry's, and Walsingham supplied the men who carried out the phony murder at Deptford. It should be pointed out that Ingram Frizer, who supposedly killed Marlowe in self-defense, was granted a Queen's pardon on June 28, 1593, and on his release from prison went directly back to work for his master, Thomas Walsingham.

In 1727, upon the demolition of Scadbury Manor, an inventory of its household goods and furnishings was made. According to A. D. Wraight (p. 257), there were a great number of pictures, maps, and drawings, including a portrait of Lord Cecil, "probably Robert Cecil, as he was exceedingly intimate with the Walsinghams and particularly Audrey Walsingham in King James's reign." There were also portraits of Lord Cecil's son and the Earl of Leicester. Other pictures included "17 large Indian pictures," drawn by John White during one of the Ralegh expeditions to North America.

As for George Chapman, he had been a close friend of Marlowe's, a member of the University Wits, and a participant in the Ralegh circle, which became known as the School of Night. It has been suggested by Wraight that the linking of the two poets in *Hero and Leander*, with its two dedications, was intended as a celebration of the marriage of Sir Thomas to Audrey. In his dedication to Lady Walsingham, Chapman wrote:

> I present your ladyship with the last affections of the first two lovers that ever muse shrined in the temple of memory; being drawn by strange instigation to employ some of my serious time in so trifling a subject, which yet made the first author, divine Musaeus, eternal....
>
> This poor dedication, in figure of the other unity betwixt Sir Thomas and yourself, hath rejoined you with him, my honoured best friend, whose continuance of ancient kindness to my still-obscured estate, though it cannot increase my love to him, which hath ever been entirely circular, yet shall it encourage my deserts to their utmost requital, and make my hearty gratitude speak.

It should be noted that during this time Chapman was deeply immersed in his monumental translation of Homer. *Seven Bookes of the Iliades* and *Achilles Shield* both appeared in 1598.

Concerning Audrey Walsingham, A.D. Wraight writes (p. 263):

> It was, however, in King James's reign that Audrey Walsingham came into her full prominence, not only socially but also in politics, and then, alas, not always in the most favourable light. She allied herself with the Secretary of State, Sir Robert Cecil, the able and ambitious successor of his father Lord Burghley and Sir Francis Walsingham. ... She was one of those who made the journey to Scotland to welcome the new queen, Anne, and accompanied her on the long progress back to London. Upon King James's accession she and Sir Thomas became joint holders of the office of Chief Keeper of the Queen's Wardrobe, and Audrey in particular gained many favours beside.

There was also a third poet involved in the publication of *Hero and Leander*, Henry Petowe. His addition appeared in 1598 as *The Second Part of Hero and Leander, Containing their Further Fortunes.* It is dedicated "To the Right Honourable Sir Henry Guilford, Knight, H.P." What is of interest to us in Petowe's poem is his wonderful references to Marlowe. He writes:

> Quick-sighted spirits, this supposed Apollo,
> Conceit no other but th' admired Marlowe;
> Marlowe admired, whose honey-flowing vein
> No English writer can as yet attain;

Whose name in Fame's immortal treasury
Truth shall record to endless memory;
Marlowe late mortal, now framed all divine,
What soul more happy than that soul of thine?
Live still in heaven thy soul, thy fame on earth
(Thou dead) of Marlowe's Hero find a dearth....
O had that king of poets breathed longer,
Then had fair beauty's fort been much more stronger; ...
What mortal soul with Marlowe might contend,
That could 'gainst reason force him stoop or bend?
Whose silver charming tongue moved such delight
That men would shun their sleep in still dark night
To meditate upon his golden lines,
His rare conceits and sweet according rhymes.
But Marlowe, still admired Marlowe's gone,
To live with Beauty in Elysium,
Immortal Beauty, who desires to hear
His sacred poesies sweet in every ear;
Marlowe must frame to Orpheus' melody
Hymns all divine to make heaven harmoney.
There ever live the prince of poetry,
Live with the living in eternity!
[57–90]

All of which was meant to acquaint a new generation of readers with Marlowe's genius. A.L. Rowse writes in his biography of Marlowe, that *Hero and Leander*, though unfinished, was "the most perfect and classic of Elizabethan poems" (p. 37). We also find in this gorgeous poem some of Marlowe's most sublime lines. On Hero he writes:

Some say for her the fairest Cupid pined,
And looking in her face, was strooken blind....
So lovely fair was Hero, Venus' nun,
As Nature wept, thinking she was undone,
Because she took more from her than she left,
And of such wondrous beauty her bereft.
[37–48]

In stark contrast to his physical description of Tamburlaine, muscular and strong, is Marlowe's graphic description of Leander:

His body was as straight as Circe's wand;
Jove might have sipped out nectar from his hand.
Even as delicious meat is to the taste,
So was his neck in touching, and surpassed
The white of Pelops' shoulder. I could tell ye
How smooth his breast was, and how white his belly,
And whose immortal fingers did imprint
That heavenly path with many a curious dint
The runs along his back, but my rude pen
Can hardly blazon forth the loves of men,

Much less of powerful gods....
Some swore he was a maid in man's attire,
For in his looks were all that men desire.
[61–84]

Undoubtedly, the poem's most famous lines are these:

It lies not in our power to love or hate,
For will in us is overruled by fate.
When two are stripped, long ere the course begin
We wish that one should lose, the other win....
The reason no man knows: let it suffice,
What we behold is censured by our eyes.
Where both deliberate, the love is slight;
Who ever loved, that loved not at first sight? ...
[167–176]

Love deeply grounded hardly is dissembled.
These lovers parled by the touch of hands;
True love is mute, and oft amazed stands....
[184–186]

Ah simple Hero, learn thyself to cherish;
Lone women like to empty houses perish....
[242–243]

One is no number; maids are nothing then,
Without the sweet society of men.
[255–256]

There is much in this poem that reminds us of *Romeo and Juliet*, with Hero in her tower at Sestos, and Leander, swimming across the strait and entering the tower to reach her. When we consider Marlowe's obsession with the subject of love, we can consider him more than just a poet, but a superb philosopher of love and all of its physical and spiritual manifestations.

34

Edward Blount: Marlowe's Executor

Chapter 6 discussed Marlowe's early writings, which included his translation of Ovid's *Elegies* and the first book of Lucan's *Pharsalia*, both of which were written while Marlowe was at Cambridge. But it wasn't until 1600, seven years after Marlowe's supposed demise, that *Pharsalia* was published for the first time by Thomas Thorpe through the auspices of Edward Blount, Marlowe's executor, to whom the book was dedicated. It should be noted that Thorpe was also the first publisher of Shakespeare's complete sonnets in 1609. Did he also get them from Blount? Thorpe's dedication to Blount reads:

> To His Kind and True Friend,
> Edward Blount.
>
> Blount: I purpose to be blunt with you, and out of my dullness to encounter you with a dedication in the memory of that pure elemental wit Chr. Marlowe, whose ghost or genius is to be seen walk the churchyard in (at the least) three or four sheets. Methinks you should presently look wild now, and grow humorously frantic upon the taste of it. Well, lest you should, let me tell you. This spirit was sometime a familiar of your own, *Lucan's first book translated*, which (in regard of your old right in it) I have raised in the circle of your patronage. But stay now, Edward: if I mistake not, you are to accommodate yourself with some few instructions touching the property of a patron, that you are not yet possessed of, and to study for your better grace as our gallants do fashions. First, you must be proud, and think you have merit enough in you, though you are n'er so empty; then, when I bring you the book, take physic, and keep state, assign me a time by your man to come again, and afore the day be sure to have changed your lodging; in the meantime sleep little, and sweat with the invention of some pitiful dry jest or two which you may happen to utter, with some little (or not at all) marking of your friends, when you have found a place for them to come in at; or if by chance something has dropped from you worthy the taking up, weary all that come to you with the often repetition of it; censure scornfully enough, and somewhat like a traveller; commend nothing lest you discredit your (that which you would seem to have) judgement. These things if you can mould yourself to them, Ned, I make no question

but they will not become you. One special virtue in our patrons of these days I have promised myself you shall fit excellently, which is to give nothing; yes, thy love I will challenge as my peculiar object, both in this, and (I hope) many more succeeding offices. Farewell: I affect not the world should measure my thoughts to thee by a scale of this nature: leave to think good of me when I fall from thee.

Thine in all rites of perfect friendship,
THOM. THORPE

What do we make of this lengthy dedication? That Edward Blount and Thomas Thorpe were friends and colleagues and both had a reverent regard for the genius and works of Christopher Marlowe. Apparently, Blount had access to this early, unpublished work. Where did he get it? Had Walsingham kept it all of these years? And why did Blount give it to Thorpe to be published? Much in the dedication is enigmatic and private. Nevertheless, it points to the important role Blount was playing in facilitating the publication of Marlowe's works. That he finally winds up being the prime mover behind the publication of the First Folio in 1623 indicates that he was the key player in the scheme to get Marlowe's post–Deptford plays to the stage. But what do we know about Blount?

He was the son of Ralph Blount, a merchant tailor of London. On June 24, 1578, he apprenticed himself to William Ponsonby, a London stationer. On June 25, 1588, Blount was duly admitted a freeman of the Stationers' Company. His shops were at the north door of St. Paul's Churchyard. 1588 was the same year in which Marlowe achieved success as a new playwright with the production of *Tamburlaine* performed by the Lord Strange's Men. As a book-lover, Marlowe frequently visited the stationers at St. Paul's Churchyard and became friends with Blount and other stationers. Undoubtedly, Blount followed Marlowe's career with great interest and was shocked to hear of Marlowe's untimely death.

The poem, *Venus and Adonis,* undoubtedly written by Marlowe, had been registered anonymously with the stationers in April 1593. Arrangement for its publication in September were probably made by Lord Burghley and Thomas Walsingham. It was probably the printer, Richard Field, who recommended his fellow Stratford man, William Shakespeare, as the person to sign the dedication to the Earl of Southamption. The same arrangement was repeated a year later with the publication of the *Rape of Lucrece.*

Meanwhile, Edward Blount became friends with Marlowe's patron, Sir Thomas Walsingham, and became the liaison between those who received Marlowe's new plays and the actor Shakespeare, who had proven himself to be both a reliable and prudent confederate. We know that Marlowe was still working for Burghley and son as an agent, that Marlowe was probably abroad and sending his plays by diplomatic pouch to Burghley who then passed them on to Walsingham who then had them transcribed into a neutral hand and arranged with Blount to see that they got to Shakespeare in their freshly transcribed version. The company's players remarked on the clean, unblotted manuscripts that Shakespeare always brought to the company.

In March 1596, Blount published John Florio's *Dictionarye in Italian and*

Englishe. Florio had been a friend of Marlowe's and a member of Sir Walter Ralegh's free-wheeling discussion group, the so-called School of Night. In 1598, Blount published Marlowe's *Hero and Leander.* Two years later Blount gave Thomas Thorpe the publication rights to Marlowe's translation of Lucan's *Pharsalia.* In 1609 Thorpe obtained the complete manuscript of "Shake-speare's Sonnets" and published them with its enigmatic dedication. Did Blount make the manuscript available to his friend Thorpe? Who else could have had access to the 154 sonnets?

Robert Giroux, in his study of the Sonnets, *The Book Known as Q,* writes (p. 4):

> If a guild member gained possession of a manuscript, and the wardens allowed it to be entered in the register at the Stationers' Hall, he — not the author — became the copyright owner. Q was entered for Thomas Thorpe on 20 May 1609 as "a Booke called Shakespeares *sonnettes.*"
>
> The mystery begins: publication of the sonnets apparently met with total silence; there was no second edition of what unquestionably ranks with the greatest poetry in the language. On 19 June 1609 Edward Alleyn, the star of the Lord Admiral's Men, the actors who were the chief rivals to Shakespeare's company, recorded in his household accounts the purchase of Q for five pence; no other undisputed reference to the newly published book is known....
>
> A not widely known fact is that Q went underground for one hundred years. The sonnets did not reappear in their original form until 1711.

Who caused the Sonnets to go underground for a hundred years? There was only one man in England capable of causing that to happen: Robert Cecil, Secretary of State. He knew who the true author of the sonnets was: Christopher Marlowe. The poems were too autobiographical and they clearly revealed that Marlowe was still alive after 1593.

In 1603 Blount published John Florio's translation of *Montaigne's Essays,* and in 1607 he published *Ars Aulica,* translated by himself from the Italian of Lorenzo Ducci and dedicated to the brothers William, Earl of Pembroke, and Philip, Earl of Montgomery, who would become the two patrons of the First Folio.

In 1620, Blount published the first English translation of Cervantes' *Don Quixote.* The book was in two parts, and Blount prefaced the second with a dedication by himself to George Villiers, Marquis of Buckingham, one of James's favorites. The translator was the mysterious Thomas Shelton, whose biographical data is virtually nonexistent. The *Encyclopædia Britannica, 11th Edition, Vol. XXIV* (p. 833) states:

> In the dedication of *The delightful history of the wittie Knight, Don Quishote* (1612) he [Shelton] explains to his patron, Lord Howard de Walden, afterwards and Earl of Suffolk, that he had translated *Don Quixote* from Spanish into English some five or six years previously in the period of forty days for a "very dear friend" who was unable to understand the original. Shelton did not use the original edition of Cervantes, but one published in Brussels in 1607. On the appearance of the Brussels imprint of the second part of *Don Quixote* in 1616, he translated that also into

English, completing his task in 1620, and printing at the same time a revised edition of the first part....

It seems that the ghostly Shelton was also a spy, no doubt in the employ of Robert Cecil. The *Britannica* continues:

It seems safe to identify him with the Thomas Shelton who wrote a sonnet prefixed to *Restitution of Decayed Intelligence* (1605) of Richard Verstegan, who was most likely the friend referred to in Shelton's preface, for there is reason to believe that both of them were then employed in a matter of doubtful loyalty, the intrigues of the Roman Catholics in England. He was acquainted with the "cries of the wild Irish," and seems to have been honestly employed in carrying letters to persons in England from Lord Deputy Fitzwilliam at Dublin Castle. But in 1599 he apparently acted as agent for Florence McCarthy to offer his service to the king of Spain, a commission for which his knowledge of Spanish especially fitted him. Soon afterwards an official precis of the facts was drawn up, in which Shelton was implicated by name. A second version of this document in 1617 is actually signed by him, but all reference to his share in the matter is omitted. Lady Suffolk, the wife of his patron, received yearly L1000 in secret service money from the Spanish king, and Shelton may have been her accomplice. If the "many affairs" of his preface were official he would not wish to call attention to his antecedents by owning friendship with Verstegan.

Was Thomas Shelton Christopher Marlowe in a new incarnation? How many secret agents did Robert Cecil have who could translate *Don Quixote* into English in forty days? Obviously, a lot more research must be done in order to unravel the full extent of Shelton's operations in Spain. The name Thomas Shelton itself is of interest. The "Thomas" is undoubtedly from Sir Thomas Walsingham, and the "Shelton" is from Audrey Shelton, Thomas's wife's maiden name.

Surprisingly, there is a lot about Shelton on the Internet. Here is some of it from a website entitled *Thomas Shelton and Hamet Benegeli:*

In the opinion of Fitzmaurice-Kelly, Shelton was a "man of letters." He brought to the execution of his enterprise an endowment and a temperament such as no late arrival could pretend to boast. He owned an alert intelligence, a perfect sympathy for the author's theme, and a vocabulary of exceeding wealth and rarity.... In narrative, as in description, the Englishman vies with the Spaniard in dignity, grace and fleetness. With inimitable felicity of phrase and setting, with sustained sonority and splendour, in passages of uncommon majesty, he continues his deliverance of a classic masterpiece....

In his introduction to the Second Part of Don Quixote, Fitzmaurice-Kelly states that of all the translators, Cervantes owes "Most to Shelton, Lord of the golden Elizabethan speech, an exquisite in the noble style."

Cervantes was indeed fortunate in having such a brilliant translator. If his identity were known, he would have his rightful place as one more distinguished figure in that golden age of English literature. As it is, few people even know his name.

But we can be sure that Blount knew his true name. And it is also possible that Shelton's patron, Baron Howard de Walden, 1st Earl of Suffolk, knew the

identity of the author, albeit under another name. The Baron had held high positions in James's government until his downfall in 1618, when he was charged with misappropriating money. His second wife, Catherine, was guilty of taking bribes from Spain. One of the Baron's three daughters was the notorious Frances Howard, who, after divorcing her first husband, Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, married Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset, one of James's favorites, and instigated the poisoning of Sir Thomas Overbury.

Did Robert Cecil have Marlowe, AKA Thomas Shelton, infiltrate the Earl of Suffolk's circle so that he could uncover corruption in James's government?

In 1623, Blount joined with another stationer, Isaac Jaggard, in producing, with the assistance of Heming and Condell, the First Folio of Shakespeare's plays. Shakespeare had died in 1616. His will did not mention a single play, or poem, or any unfinished literary work or manuscript of any kind. Yet, Blount was able to assemble thirty-six plays, twenty of which had never been published before. Where did he find them all? We shall discuss the First Folio in depth in another chapter. However, at this point it is pretty clear that Blount knew who was the true author of the plays in the First Folio. According to the DNB, "The immediate supervision which Blount exercised in the preparation of all his books for the press has led to the reasonable inference that Blount was the active, although not very careful, editor of this edition of Shakespeare's plays."

Nor was the publication of the First Folio the end of Blount's career as a publisher. In 1632 he collected for the first time John Lyly's *Sixe Court Comedies,* and had them printed by William Stansby for publication by himself. Lyly died in 1606, but Blount apparently had access to Lyly's manuscripts. It is believed that Blount died in late 1632.

Blount's career covers the entire span of the Marlowe-Shakespeare collusion. He knew all of the principals involved and he was able to gather their financial cooperation in producing the second most important book in English literary history—the first being the King James Version of the Holy Bible. In doing so, he had remained loyal to his beloved friend Christopher Marlowe.

35

Marlowe and the Pembrokes

One of the great mysteries that has baffled Shakespeare scholars for centuries is the identification of the W.H. in Thomas Thorpe's cryptic dedication, with its strange punctuation, which prefaced his publication of Shakespeare's sonnets in 1609. It reads:

TO.THE.ONLIE.BEGETTER.OF.
THESE. INSVING.SONNETS.
Mr.W.H.ALL.HAPPINESSE.
AND.THAT.ETERNITIE.
PROMISED.
BY.
OVR.EVER-LIVING.POET.
WISHETH.
THE.WELL-WISHING.
ADVENTVRER.IN.
SETTING.
FORTH.
T.T.

Some scholars believe that the mysterious W.H. was Henry Wriothesley, the Earl of Southampton, to whom Shakespeare dedicated *Venus and Adonis* and the *Rape of Lucrece*. But the initials clearly don't match: W.H. is not H.W. Others have speculated that the initials stand for William Herbert, 3rd Earl of Pembroke (1580–1630), the son of the 2nd Earl of Pembroke and his wife, the famous Countess of Pembroke, nee Mary Sidney, sister of Sir Philip Sidney. She married the Earl in 1577. He was twenty years her senior and had had two previous wives, both of whom were childless. Was the earl infertile?

Marlowe-Shakespeare scholar John Baker believes that Marlowe, at the age of 15, had an affair with the 18-year-old Countess, which resulted in the birth of William Herbert in April 1580. The idea may not be as far-fetched as it would seem at first blush. If the Earl was twice the age of his young bride, was indeed infertile and strongly desirous of an heir, he might have told the Countess, with a quiet sense of urgency, to find a suitable male to impregnate her, so that he

could have a male heir to succeed him as Earl of Pembroke. Of course, she must use the greatest discretion and secrecy in her choice of inseminator. Back in those days there were no fertility clinics for married couples to go to for help in such matters. And so, the Countess was obliged to use the tried and true method: a discreet affair with a suitable male. Whom did she choose?

She had known the young Marlowe as her brother's intelligent, good-looking, healthy, and highly literate page, and had spent some time with him at the family estate, Penshurst, not far from Canterbury where he was now at the King's School. He was the perfect candidate, for he was a commoner, socially invisible, respectful of the nobility, and a person who would never embarrass or betray Philip Sidney's loving sister. Thus, in the summer of 1579, there must have been a convenient occasion in which the young Countess was able to seduce the virginal, testosterone-driven Christopher Marlowe. And there is every likelihood that, as a result of this first sexual experience, Marlowe not only considered it a privilege to contribute his blood to the Sidney-Pembroke line, but also fell madly in love with the Countess.

All of this may sound like a romantic historical novel, but it seems to have the ring of truth. What we do know is that William Herbert was conceived during the summer of 1579 and born nine months later on April 8, 1580, just three years after Mary's marriage to the elderly earl. She had fulfilled her primary responsibility and wifely duty of providing her husband with an heir. Needless to say, the earl was ecstatic and entertained the entire parish at dinner to celebrate the birth of his son.

Was Marlowe indeed in love with the Countess? A.L. Rowse, in his biography of Marlowe, writes (p. 169):

> In September of 1592 Robert Greene had died, at the age of thirty-five, and about the same time Thomas Watson followed at much the same age. In November Marlowe wrote a Latin dedication for Watson's *Amintae Gaudia* to the famous Countess of Pembroke, patron of the Muses, Sir Philip Sidney's sister, herself a poet. She was an appropriate patron to seek, since her husband's [Pembroke's Men] had performed *Edward II*. This dedication has usually been overlooked, since it came out under the initials C. M.; but beneath the customary floridity of the Latin —*florida verborum venustas*— we detect not only Marlowe the scholar, but something more about him.
>
> > To the most illustrious heroine, endowed with gifts of both mind and body, Mary, Countess of Pembroke. Delia, born of a laurelled race, true sister of Sidney, Apollo's prophet; fostering parent of letters, to whose immaculate embrace virtue, outraged by the assault of barbarism and ignorance, flies for refuge, as once Philomela from the tyrant of Thrace: Muse of the poets of our time and of all most happily burgeoning wits; heavenly offspring, who impartest now to my rude pen the lofty inspiration whereby my poor self gains power to surpass what my unripe talent is wont to bring forth — deign to be patron to this posthumous Amyntas, as to thy adopted son, the more so in that his dying father humbly bequeathed him to your keeping.... So shall I, whose slender wealth is but the sea shore myrtle of Venus, Daphne's evergreen laurel, invoke you on the first page of every poem as mistress of the Muses.

If ever Marlowe had written a love letter to the Countess, this was it, albeit in Latin.

Hugh Ross Williamson, in *Kind Kit*, provides additional insight into the Pembroke-Marlowe connection (p. 196):

> A new theatrical company was forming under the patronage of the Earl of Pembroke whose seat, as President of Wales and Warden of the Marches was at Ludlow, but whose residence was at Wilton in Wiltshire. It would have been more accurate to have called the new group of actors "the Countess of Pembroke's Company," for it was she, the elderly Earl's third wife whom he had married when she was sixteen, who had turned Wilton into a centre of the arts and sciences so that it was "like a college, there were so many learned and ingenious persons." The young Countess, "a beautiful lady of excellent wit, with a sharp-oval face and hair of a reddish-yellow," was the adored sister of Sir Philip Sidney. To her "my dear Lady and Sister, principal ornament to the family of Sidneys" he had dedicated his *Arcadia* and after his death she considered it her duty to continue his patronage of poetry and to try to raise the stage to the level of his ideals as he had expressed them in his *Defence of Poesie*.

The Countess also had her own ideas about playwriting, which we believe had an influence on Marlowe. Williamson writes (p. 196):

> The Countess considered that the contemporary French dramatist, Robert Garnier, with his historical plays written in a classical Senecan manner, pointed to the style to "chase away gross barbarism." She herself translated into English Garnier's tragedy on Mark Antony and encouraged the poet Samuel Daniel, who was tutor to her ten-year-old son, to write a companion piece on Cleopatra. Her own work she had published in a fine edition, but the obvious necessity was an acting company.

Apparently, the Earl had no objection to his young wife's desire to create an acting company. The Pembroke name alone would ensure the appearance of his players at Court. The Countess's interests also brought her into the Ralegh group. Williamson writes (p. 197):

> The Countess of Pembroke's activities and interests naturally overlapped those of the Raleigh "school"—Sir Walter's half-brother, Adrian Gilbert, actually worked with her in her alchemical laboratory—and Marlowe, when the matter was broached to him, was willing enough to provide a new play for the new company.

Were the Henry the Sixth plays written in conformity with the Countess's wishes? The decision to write three highly complex historical plays telling the complicated story of the War of the Roses may have been written at the behest of the Countess, willing to support the author financially during the writing. She was known to assign topics to different writers in her circle. It is no small coincidence that the Countess's protégé, Samuel Daniel, living at Wilton, also embarked on writing his own version of the War of the Roses, *The Civile Wars betweene the Howses of Lancaster and Yorke*, written in the late 1590s and published in 1609. Other poets within the Countess's coterie included her brother's friends Edward Dyer, Fulke Greville, and Samuel Brandon. Thomas

Kyd, desperate for a new patron after his brush with the Star Chamber, produced a translation of Garnier's *Cornelie*. But he died in 1594.

As for Marlowe's relations with the Countess, they ended with his reported death in 1593. In fact, Pembroke's Men disbanded shortly after the Deptford event. And when the Countess's husband died in January 1601, she could no longer afford her extravagant ambition to reform the Elizabethan theatre.

Charles Nicholl writes in *The Reckoning* (p. 172):

> A man much closer to Marlowe in time and circumstances was the poet Samuel Daniel, author of the influential sonnet-sequence *Delia*. In late 1585, having recently left Oxford without taking a degree, Daniel was "licensed" by Sir Francis Walsingham to "travel into France." This was not a recruitment as such: Daniel's intention was, as he put it, "to study, to the end to render myself fit for the service of my country."

In 1581, the Countess gave birth to a daughter, Katherine, who died three years later, and in 1583 she had a second daughter, Anne, about whom we know very little. However, in 1584, she gave birth to a second son, Philip Herbert. If Henry, the Second Earl of Pembroke, was indeed infertile, one must ask who was the father of Katherine, Anne, and Philip Herbert? Was it the young poet Samuel Daniel born in 1561, who was 22 in 1583, the year of Philip Herbert's conception? We do not know when the poet first met the Countess, but we do know that when Daniel returned to England in September of 1586, he was hired by the Countess to tutor her son William. What we also know is that the Countess was deeply religious and throughout her life carried a heavy burden of guilt for her personal sins and transgressions.

Did William Herbert ever know the identity of his true father? This delicate situation reminds us of the scene in *King John* (1.1. 249–260) where Philip the Bastard begs his mother to tell him who his true father is. And when she tells him that it was King Richard Cordelion, he remarks: "I would not wish a better father." Hannay tells us (p. 169) that William, aged 20, expressed no grief when the 2nd Earl of Pembroke died in January 1601.

Whatever the truth may be, the Countess's two sons rose in prominence and became important figures during the reign of King James I. William Herbert, the Third Earl of Pembroke, was a conspicuous figure at the court of James I. On several occasions he opposed the schemes of George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, the King's favorite. Nevertheless, Pembroke served as lord chamberlain of the royal household from 1615 to 1625 and lord steward from 1626 to 1630. He was chancellor of Oxford in 1624 at which time Broardgates Hall was renamed Pembroke College in his honor.

We believe that Pembroke is the "Mr. W.H." of Shakespeare's sonnets and his mistress, Mary Fitton, the "dark lady" of the poems. When Fitton became pregnant Pembroke promised to marry her. But when the child was stillborn, Pembroke coldly rejected her. In 1604, Pembroke married Lady Mary Talbot, who then became the Countess of Pembroke, replacing Mary Sidney Herbert with that title. The couple lived regally, and the Earl, quite the *bon vivant*, spent

extravagantly. Philip married Susan de Vere, daughter of the Earl of Oxford, in 1604, the same year in which Oxford died.

In 1623, the Earl of Pembroke and his brother Philip became the "incomparable pair of brethren" to whom the First Folio was dedicated. No doubt, it was their financial largesse that made the project possible. Was this the crowning achievement of publishing entrepreneur Edward Blount? Was this an investment that would later payoff well?

As for Philip Herbert, apparently he became the chief favorite of James I, owing to his good looks and passion for hunting and field sports. In 1605, the king made him Earl of Montgomery and Baron Herbert of Shurtland. At the death of his brother in 1630, he became the 4th Earl of Pembroke.

As for Samuel Daniel, who is the rival poet of the sonnets, he was probably the writer most influenced by the Countess. In 1592 he produced his sonnet sequence *Delia* and *Rosamund*, and subsequently, in 1594, a Senecan tragedy, *Cleopatra*. In 1595, he wrote his epic poem on the War of the Roses. In 1604, he was invited by the new king to provide the first masque of the reign and became a licensee for the Queen's Revels Company. In 1615, he became Inspector of the Children of the Queen's Revels. In his last years, he retired to a farm near Beckington, in Somerset. He is known to have been on poor terms with Ben Jonson, who thought little of his poetry. He died in 1619. Mary Sidney, dowager Countess of Pembroke, died at her home in London in 1621. Ironically, dead Marlowe outlived them all.

36

The Sonnets

Probably more commentary has been written about Shakespeare's *Sonnets* than any other poetry in English literature. Most of the commentators agree that the Sonnets are autobiographical. The problem is that this poetic autobiography does not fit the actual biography of William Shakespeare. But if you believe that these poems were actually written by Christopher Marlowe, then we find a much better match between the poet and his autobiography.

The fact that the Sonnets were suppressed shortly after they were published by Thomas Thorpe in 1609 indicates that those in high places knew of their autobiographical content and ordered them to be withdrawn. Why? Because the Sonnets proved that Marlowe was alive after his trumped-up death in 1593.

The first seventeen Sonnets, urging a young man to marry, were probably commissioned by Lord Burghley who knew Marlowe well as a very skilled poet. A.L. Rowse writes in his biography of the Earl of Southampton (p. 53):

> Lord Burghley had a granddaughter to marry — in fact, several: these were the children of his favourite daughter Anne, whom he had married in 1571 to his ward, Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford.... The eldest was Lady Elizabeth Vere, now in 1590 15 years old and therefore of an age to be married. (Lord Burghley was all in favour of marrying people off young.) Lady Elizabeth was a couple of years junior to Southampton — what more suitable than a match between them? ... And it seems that the youth, brought up in Burghley's house and by his care, had given his promise to marry the girl.

But the young Earl held off. Burghley spoke with Sir Thomas Stanhope, a friend of the Earl's mother, the Countess of Southampton, who told Sir Thomas, "I do not find a disposition in my son to be tied as yet. What will be hereafter, time shall try, and no want shall be found on my behalf." Burghley then spoke with the Earl's grandfather, Lord Montagu, who then conferred with his daughter the Countess and the Earl himself. It finally became obvious that the young Earl was simply not interested in marriage. He was more interested in joining the Earl of Essex's martial adventure in France. It was probably during this time that Burghley had Marlowe write the Sonnets urging the handsome young man to marry. Apparently, the Sonnets, as brilliant as they were, did not work.

One of the reasons why commentators on the Sonnets have been so far off the biographical mark is that they accept the orthodox view that Greene was referring to Shakespeare when he wrote about the Shake-scene in his *Groatsworth of Wit*, thus adopting the notion that Shakespeare was already known as a playwright in 1592, for which there is no evidence. We are quite convinced that Greene was referring to Edward Alleyne, the actor, who was indeed the Shake-scene of his time. Also, the orthodox commentators accept the view that Shakespeare's dedications to the young Earl of Southampton in *Venus and Adonis* in 1593 and *The Rape of Lucrece* in 1594 indicate that the young man in the Sonnets on whom Shakespeare lavished such warm expressions of love was Southampton when there is no evidence that Shakespeare ever met or knew the young Earl. The dedications were *pro forma* attempts to gain the patronage of a wealthy nobleman.

But if we approach the Sonnets from the viewpoint that they were written by Christopher Marlowe, the poems begin to make sense. As we have asserted, the first seventeen Sonnets were written for Lord Burghley who used them to persuade the Earl of Southampton to marry his granddaughter. They didn't work even though they represent some of the most exquisite poetry in the English language. Consider the first four lines in Sonnet 2:

> When forty winters shall besiege thy brow,
> And dig deep trenches in thy beauty's field,
> Thy youth's proud livery so gazed on now
> Will be a tottered weed of small worth held.

Sonnet 3 is equally exquisite:

> Look in thy glass and tell the fact thou viewest,
> Now is the time that face should form another,
> Whose fresh repair if now thou not renewest,
> Thou dost beguile the world, unbless some mother....
> Die single, and thine image dies with thee.

Two lines in Sonnet 10 are very much to the point:

> Make thee another self for love of me,
> That beauty still may live in thine and thee.

Sonnet 15 was certainly written by a dramatist with Marlowe's experience:

> When I consider every thing that grows
> Holds in perfection but a little moment,
> That this huge stage presenteth nought but shows
> Wherein the stars in secret influence comment.

In Sonnet 18—"Shall I compare thee to a summer's day"—the author has given us one of the loveliest poems in the English language. For whom was it written? I believe that it was written by Marlowe to his patron and protector Thomas Walsingham who was about the same age as Marlowe. The love expressed in this sonnet and many of the others is not sexual. It is one of

devotion and friendship. Indeed, the word love was used extensively among men to denote high esteem, worthiness, as well as emotional attachment. This sonnet ends with a theme found elsewhere in Marlowe, that the poem will outlive its subject and defy the ravages of time. It is well stated in the last two lines:

> So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
> So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

In Sonnet 19, the poet defies Time by again asserting the endurance of verse:

> Yet do thy worst, old Time: despite thy wrong,
> My love shall in my verse ever live young.

Marlowe had already expressed this sentiment in his translation of *Ovid's Elegies* (Elegia III):

> So likewise we will through the world be rung,
> And with my name shall thine be always sung.
> [Book I, Elegia III. 25–26]

In Elegia X, we find a variation of the same theme:

> Garments do wear, jewels and gold do waste,
> The fame that verse gives doth for ever last.
> [61–62]

And in Elegia XV we read:

> Therefore when flint and iron wear away,
> Verse is immortal, and shall ne'er decay.
> [31–32]

And that is why the Sonnets are still read and enjoyed in the twenty-first century.

Sonnet 25 clearly relates to the poet's life after the events at Deptford. He writes:

> Let those who are in favour with their stars
> Of public honour and proud titles boast,
> Whilst I whom fortune of such triumph bars
> Unlooked for joy in that I honour most....
> The painful warrior famoused for fight,
> After a thousand victories once foiled,
> Is from the book of honour rased quite,
> And all the rest forgot for which he toiled:
> Then happy I that love and am beloved
> Where I may not remove, nor be removed.

In Sonnet 27 we have a picture of the poet as he travels away from England after Deptford:

> Weary with toil, I haste to my bed,
> The dear repose for limbs with travel tired,

But then begins a journey in my head
To work my mind, when body's work's expired;
For then my thoughts (from far where I abide)
Intend a zealous pilgrimage to thee,
And keep my drooping eyelids open wide,
Looking on darkness which the blind do see....
Lo thus by day my limbs, by night my mind,
For thee, and for myself, no quiet find.

Sonnet 28 repeats the same theme of toilsome travel. Sonnet 44 also deals with travel and distance:

If the dull substance of my flesh were thought,
Injurious distance should not stop my way,
For then despite of space I would be brought,
From limits far remote, where thou dost stay.
No matter then although my foot did stand
Upon the farthest earth removed from thee,
For nimble thought can jump both sea and land
As soon as think the place where he would be.

In Sonnet 50, the same theme of exile and travel gives us an idea of the agony that Marlowe suffered in being separated from his friend Walsingham:

How heavy do I journey on the way,
When what I seek (my weary travel's end)
Doth teach that ease and that repose to say,
"Thus far the miles are measured from thy friend."
The beast that bears me, tired with my woe,
Plods dully on, to bear that weight in me,
As if by some instinct the wretch did know
His rider loved not speed being made from thee:
The bloody spur cannot provoke him on,
That sometimes anger thrusts into his hide,
Which heavily he answers with a groan,
More sharp to me than spurring to his side.

Sonnet 51 repeats the same theme:

Thus can my love excuse the slow offence
Of my dull bearer, when from thee I speed:
From where thou art, why should I haste me thence?
Till I return, of posting is no need....
Since from thee going he went wilful-slow,
Towards thee I'll run, and give him leave to go.

Finally, in Sonnet 29 Marlowe reveals the full extent of his unhappy post–Deptford predicament:

When in disgrace with Fortune and men's eyes,
I all alone beweep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself and curse my fate,

Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,
Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee, and then my state
(Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth) sings hymns at heaven's gate,
For thy sweet love rememb'red such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

Marlowe would have to live in this "outcast state" for the rest of his life, adopting other names and identities. No one could have predicted that he would go on to write the greatest dramas in English, if not world, literature, and a way would have to be devised to get these dramas produced and staged.

We find references to the Deptford event in a number of other sonnets. In Sonnet 72, the poet writes:

O lest your true love may seem false in this,
That you for love speak well of me untrue,
My name be buried where my body is,
And live no more to shame nor me nor you.

Yet, the Marlowe name was rehabilitated by the publication of *Hero and Leander* in 1598 with Edward Blount's dedication to Sir Thomas Walsingham.

In Sonnet 73, with an exquisite autumnal setting, we find Marlowe's enigmatic motto found on his portrait:

That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang....
In me thou seest the glowing of such fire
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
Consumed with that which it was nourished by.

That last line is a rendition in English of the motto in Latin on Marlowe's portrait: *Quod me nutrit me destruit*

Sonnet 74 is, no doubt, about the events at Deptford addressed to Thomas Walsingham, written in a state of depression.

But be contented: when that fell arrest
Without all bail shall carry me away,
My life hath in this line some interest,
Which for memorial still with thee shall stay.
When thou reviewest this, thou dost review
The very part was consecrate to thee:
The earth can have but earth, which is his due;
My spirit is thine, the better part of me:

So then thou hast but lost the dregs of life,
The prey of worms, my body being dead;
The coward conquest of a wretch's knife,
Too base of thee to be remembered.

Sonnet 80 refers to the rival poet, the Countess of Pembroke's protégé, Samuel Daniel:

O, how I faint when I of you do write,
Knowing a better spirit doth use your name
And in the praise thereof spends all his might
To make me tongue-tied, speaking of your fame! ...
Then if he thrive and I be cast away,
The worst was this; — my love was my decay.

And in Sonnet 86, he writes:

Was it the proud full sail of his great verse,
Bound for the prize of all too precious you....
But when your countenance fill'd up his line,
Then lack'd I matter; that enfeebled mine.

Sonnet 78 reminds us of Marlowe's dedication of Watson's poem, *Amintae Gaudia,* to the Countess of Pembroke, who probably inspired him to write the three Henry the Sixth plays:

So oft have I invok'd thee for my Muse
And found such fair assistance in my verse
As every alien pen hath got my use
And under thee their poesy disperse....
Yet be most proud of that which I compile,
Whose influence is thine, and born of thee:
In others' works thou dost but mend the style,
And arts with thy sweet graces graced be;
But thou art all my art, and dost advance
As high as learning my rude ignorance.

Sonnet 108 seems to be about Marlowe's relation with his son, William Herbert, the W.H. of the dedication:

What's in the brain, that ink may character,
Which hath not figur'd to thee my true spirit?
What's new to speak, what new to register,
That may express my love, or thy dear merit?
Nothing, sweet boy; but yet, like prayers divine,
I must each day say o'er the very same;
Counting no old thing old, thou mine, I thine,
Even as when first I hallow'd thy fair name.

There are many love poems among the Sonnets and it is difficult to know to whom they were written: Thomas Walsingham, William Herbert, the Countess of Pembroke, or someone else. I believe that many of them were indeed

addressed to the Countess with whom Marlowe fell in love when he was seduced by her at the age of 15. Marlowe makes it very clear that his love, as the popular modern ballad says, "is here to stay." He states in Sonnet 116, one of the greatest love poems ever written:

> Let me not to the marriage of true minds
> Admit impediments. Love is not love
> Which alters when it alteration finds,
> Or bends with the remover to remove:
> O, no! it is an ever-fixed mark,
> That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
> It is the star to every wandering bark,
> Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
> Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
> Within his bending sickle's compass come;
> Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
> But bears it out even to the edge of doom.

If there was ever a poem that defined true love as eternal, this is it.

In the sonnets referring to the so-called Dark Lady, there has been speculation that the mysterious raven-haired beauty was Mary Fitton, mistress to William Herbert. Fitton was the daughter of Sir Edward Fitton, a Cheshire knight, who was greatly concerned about his daughter's future. She had become Queen Elizabeth's youngest and most beautiful maid of honour and attracted a good deal of male attention. In 1600 she became the lover of William Herbert. By the New Year, she could no longer conceal that she was pregnant and Herbert admitted responsibility. Herbert was put in Fleet Prison and Mary was put in the care of Lady Hawkins. But after she delivered a still-born son, Herbert refused to marry her.

Neville Williams writes in *All the Queen's Men* (p. 252):

> This attitude did not speed his release from prison, where he complained to Cecil that being cut off from the Queen's presence was "hell" and he asked for a change of climate to "purge me of melancholy, for else I shall never be fit for any civil society." Eventually he returned to Wilton, then married Lady Mary Talbot and settled down to become the "Maecenas" of Jacobean England, patronising Ben Jonson, Massinger, Chapman, Inigo Jones and many others. Mary was sent back to Cheshire in disgrace, her career at court in ruins, a reminder to other maids of honour and their admirers to behave more circumspectly.

It is therefore not unreasonable to believe that when Cecil read the Sonnets published by Thomas Thorpe in 1609, he was alarmed by what he read about the Dark Lady, the Countess of Pembroke, the rival poet, and other clearly autobiographical material about Marlowe and he immediately quashed the book's distribution.

But it is Sonnet 76 that provides incontrovertible proof that Marlowe wrote the Sonnets. In it the poet not only reveals his fear of being identified as the author of the poems, but he provides us with the best clue that he was! How?

By writing the name of his friend Thomas Watson in an acrostic in the beginning letters—TWATSO—of lines 4 through 9:

> Why is my verse so barren of new pride?
> So far from variation or quick change?
> Why with the time do I not glance aside
> To new-found methods and to compounds strange?
> Why write I still all one, ever the same,
> And keep invention in a noted weed,
> That every word doth almost tell my name,
> Showing their birth, and where they did proceed?
> O know, sweet love, I always write of you,
> And you and love are still my argument;
> So all my best is dressing old words new,
> Spending against what is already spent:
> For as the sun is daily new and old,
> So is my love still telling what is told.

It was Watson who had saved Marlowe's life in the fracas with William Bradley in 1589. He died in September 1592, a great loss for Marlowe. It was Watson's last poem which Marlowe dedicated to the Countess of Pembroke. It was John Baker, the intrepid Marlovian scholar, who was first to notice the Watson acrostic in the Sonnet. None of the hundreds of scholars, who had pored over the Sonnets and analyzed each poem for its hidden meaning, recognized the acrostic. John Baker proved that when you change the way you look at things, not only do the things you look at change, but they leap out at you as you search.

37

The First Folio

Next to the publication of the King James Version of the Bible, the First Folio, containing the thirty-six plays with William Shakespeare named as author, is the single most valuable book published in the English language. It contains what has become known as the Shakespeare canon. It was a major publishing enterprise requiring a large investment of time, editorial work, and money.

The idea for a folio may have been suggested by the publication of Ben Jonson's plays in a handsome folio in 1616, the year Shakespeare died. But it wasn't until 1621 that the First Folio project got underway. The 1622 catalogue of the Frankfurt Book Fair carried an announcement of its publication. And who was the prime mover behind the project? None other than Marlowe's executor, Edward Blount, who had engaged the Jaggard company to do the printing. And the reason why it took two years to complete the project is because Jaggard had to interrupt work on the Folio in order to complete some other printing commitment.

The time of interruption was no doubt profitably used to do the enormous editorial work on the 36 plays. Sixteen of them had previously been published in unauthorized quarto editions and were quite imperfect, requiring corrections and rewriting. Who did the editing and rewriting? We can assume that Marlowe was still alive at age 59 and as author was most qualified to edit his own work. Then there were the sixteen plays that had never been previously published. How did Blount find them? How did he even know they existed?

What we do know is that on November 8, 1623, Blount and Jaggard registered sixteen plays with the Stationers' Registry. They were: *The Tempest*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *As You Like It*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Henry VI*

Opposite: **The title page of the First Folio with the famous Martin Droeshout engraving of William Shakespeare, not drawn from life. Note the masklike face and the name of Marlowe's executor, Ed. Blount, at the bottom. (By Permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.)**

Ex Dono Willi. Jaggard Typographi an° 1623

Mr. WILLIAM

SHAKESPEARES

COMEDIES, HISTORIES, & TRAGEDIES.

Published according to the True Originall Copies.

LONDON

Printed by Isaac Iaggard, and Ed. Blount. 1623

Part I, *Henry VIII*, *Coriolanus*, *Timon of Athens*, *Julius Caesar*, *Macbeth*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Cymbeline*.

There were other plays for which the First Folio must be considered their first printing: *The Merry Wives of Windsor* had been published in a surreptitious quarto in 1602, an imperfect copy of the author's first sketch of the comedy. The First Folio's copy is the first edition of the play in its complete state. Apparently, Blount got hold of the author's manuscript. *The Taming of the Shrew*, *King John*, *Second Part of Henry VI*, *The Third Part of Henry VI* saw their first publication in the First Folio.

In other words, had it not been for the First Folio some of the greatest dramatic masterpieces in the English language would have been lost. One must credit Edward Blount with having rescued from certain oblivion these great works of literary genius. And that was probably the motivating force behind the project: the knowledge that there existed these great plays that future generations should be allowed to enjoy.

And who were willing to finance this enormously expensive enterprise? Why, none other than the two Pembroke brothers, William Herbert, Third Earl of Pembroke, and his brother, Philip, Earl of Montgomery. In other words, the Marlowe, Blount, Pembroke connection were all there in this monumental undertaking. The rest — Jonson's poem, the poems by L. Digges, Hugh Holland, I.M., the promotional preface by John Heminge and Henry Condell — were meant to allay any speculation that the plays were written by Christopher Marlowe, who was supposed to be dead. Indeed, Diana Price tells us (p. 122): "It appears that the selection of Jonson, Digges, and Mabbe [I.M.] to write commendatory verses for the Shakespeare collection is owed to their association with Edward Blount, the publisher of the First Folio."

But what is even more interesting is that while Marlowe accepted the use of Shakespeare's name as author, he managed to inject in each play some clue which future generations of readers would find revealing the true author's identity. He must have believed very strongly that someday the truth would out.

We shall now look at the 36 plays in the Folio and see what they tell us about their authorship. For our purposes we shall examine each play in its chronological order, an order generally accepted by most Shakespearean scholars.

Henry VI, Parts One, Two, and Three and *Richard III*

Thus we begin with the three plays, *Henry VI*, Parts One, Two, and Three, which are the earliest plays attributed to Shakespeare, plus *Richard III*, which can be considered Part Four of this continuous story of the War of the Roses. In fact, it is the death of Richard on the battlefield — after that famous line, "A horse! A horse! My kingdom for a horse!" — that ends the War of the Roses.

The First Folio brings the authorized texts of all four plays together for the first time. It should be noted that the earlier Quartos of Part Two (published in

1594 with the erroneous title *The First Part of the Contention)* and Part Three of *Henry VI* (published in 1595 as *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York*) are much shorter than the First Folio versions of the same plays. All of which indicates that a considerable amount of additional writing was done before the plays were ready for inclusion in the First Folio. Who did the writing, and when was it done?

Part One, in which Sir John Talbot is the hero, gives us the Joan of Arc story as seen through English eyes. The poetic dialogue between Talbot and his son on the battlefield is one of the most poignant in all of Elizabethan literature. The play also has the embryo of the great character Falstaff in a cowardly figure named Sir John Fastolfe. Part Two has the memorable Jack Cade, a sort of Elizabethan Pol Pot. Part Three has the famous line, which was paraphrased by Robert Greene in 1592 to describe Edward Alleyn, "A Tygers hart wrapt in a Players hide."

Speaking of Edward Alleyn, Edward Burns, in his Introduction to the Arden edition of *Henry VI, Part One*, writes (p. 2):

> Edward Alleyn seems the most likely actor to have created the role of Talbot. He had created the leading roles in Marlowe's plays and in 1588 moved from the disbanded Lord Admiral's Men to Lord Strange's Men.

The inference is that Alleyn knew that Marlowe had written the play. It is also probable that Marlowe wrote the three Henry VI plays under the influence of the Countess of Pembroke. Her protégé, Samuel Daniel, also wrote of the War of the Roses in *The First Four Books of the Civil Wars*, which appeared in 1595. Daniel, we strongly believe, was the rival poet in the Sonnets.

Richard III was first published in an unauthorized Quarto in 1597. The play is a breathtaking *tour de force* in character development by Marlowe. In it we get a terrifying study of a psychotic character which only Marlowe could depict. Marlowe's hand can also be seen in Act I, Scene 4, in which Clarence is murdered by two executioners sent by Richard. It reminds us of the execution scene in *Edward II*, in which Edward engages in a weird conversation with the man sent to murder him.

Marlowe's style can be found throughout the four plays. A. L. Rowse writes in *The Annotated Shakespeare* (p. 756):

> The dominant influence observable again and again in *Henry VI* is Marlowe's. He had patented this grandiloquent poetic diction, in splendid blank verse, in *Tamburlaine*.... Ubiquitous is the influence of school education in the classics and of Bible and Prayer Book from constant early attendance at church.

It should be noted that Shakespeare had no schooling that we know of and didn't even own a Bible.

The Comedy of Errors

The next play to consider is *The Comedy of Errors*, the shortest play in the First Folio. Scholars believe that it was written in 1591–92. Had it not been

included in the First Folio, it would have been lost to history. The plot of the play is derived from the *Menaechmi* of Plautus, the Roman comic poet, and was adapted by Marlowe from the original Latin. Since it was written before the events at Deptford, we can assume that Marlowe wrote it. The fact that Blount included it in the First Folio is evidence that it was written by his good friend.

The play is a slap-stick yet sophisticated comedy, which uses two sets of identical twins to create absurd, hilarious situations in which confused identities run riot. It is skillfully written in delightful verse and takes place in one day, in accordance with classical form.

The poet's genius is revealed in these entrancing lines spoken by Antipholus of Syracuse:

> He that commends me to mine own content,
> Commends me to the thing I cannot get.
> I to the world am like a drop of water
> That in the ocean seeks another drop;
> Who, falling there to find his fellow forth;
> Unseen, inquisitive, confounds himself:
> So I, to find a mother and a brother,
> In quest of them, unhappy, lose myself.
> [Act 1, Scene 2, 33–40]

The playwright also managed to insert his own humorous commentaries on contemporary geopolitics in a hilarious dialogue between Antipholus of Syracuse and Dromio of Syracuse as they talk about the kitchen wench Nell. She is a very fat lady whose body resembles a globe.

> *Dromio.* ...she is spherical, like a globe; I could find out countries in her.
> *Ant. S.* In what part of her body stands Ireland?
> *Dromio.* Marry, sir, in her buttocks: I found it out by the bogs.
> *Ant. S.* Where Scotland?
> *Dromio.* I found it by the barrenness; hard in the palm of the hand.
> *Ant. S.* Where France?
> *Dromio.* In her forehead, armed and reverted, making war against her heir.
> *Ant. S.* Where England?
> *Dromio.* I looked for the chalky cliffs, but I could find no whiteness in them; but I guess it stood in her chin, by the salt rheum that ran between France and it.
> *Ant. S.* Where Spain?
> *Dromio.* Faith, I saw it not; but I felt it hot in her breath.
> *Ant. S.* Where America, the Indies?
> *Dromio.* O, sir! upon her nose, all o'er embellished with rubies, carbuncles, sapphires, declining in their rich aspect to the hot breath of Spain, who sent whole armadoes of carracks to be ballast at her nose.
> *Ant. S.* Where stood Belgia, the Netherlands?
> *Dromio.* O, sir! I did not look so low.
> [Act 3, Scene 2, 116–144]

Marlowe knew how to entertain and educate at the same time!

Titus Andronicus

It is believed that *Titus Andronicus* was written in 1593 and first published in an unauthorized Quarto in 1594. A. M. Witherspoon, editor of the Yale Shakespeare edition, writes (p. 121):

> External evidence against Shakespeare's authorship of *Titus* has been found in the absence of his name from all three Quartos of the play. The conclusiveness of this evidence is impaired, however, by the fact that the poet's name does not appear on any of the Quartos of *Henry V*, or on any of the three Quartos of *Romeo and Juliet*.... The character of Aaron is by almost all critics conceded to be modeled on Marlowe's Barabas and Ithamore. Much of the verse also, if not Marlowe's, is close imitation of that poet's lines.

However, the fact that the play was included in the First Folio leaves no doubt that it was written by Marlowe. Harold Bloom writes in *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human* (p. 80):

> An aesthetic defense of *Titus Andronicus* is possible only if you center it upon Aaron, its most Marlovian character, and if you regard the entire play as a bloody farce, in the mode of Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*.

There are more than enough clues in the text of the play indicating that it was written by Marlowe. There are about six references to Dido in the play. In fact, in Act 2, Scene 3, Tamora, in a love scene with Aaron in a sequestered part of the woods, recalls the scene in *Dido Queen of Carthage* (Act 3, Scene 4) where Dido confesses her love to Aeneas in a cave where the two had taken shelter during a storm. Is it not interesting that Tamora should know the details of the scene in Marlowe's play? One gets the impression that Marlowe was trying to publicize his play by mentioning Dido and the Trojan war in so many places in the text.

One also finds echoes of the Sonnets in the play. Tamara's son Demetrius says about Lavinia in Act 2, Scene 1:

> She is a woman, therefore to be woo'd;
> She is a woman, therefore to be won;
> She is Lavinia, therefore to be lov'd.
> [83–85]

In Sonnet 41 we read:

> Gentle thou art, and therefore to be won,
> Beauteous thou art, therefore to be assailed.

And in *Henry VI, Part One* (Act 5, Scene 3) the Earl of Suffolk, smitten by Margaret, whispers to himself:

> She's beautiful, and therefore to be woo'd;
> She is a woman, therefore to be won.
> [78–79]

No other play in the First Folio is so full of references to classical mythology, or has so many Latin expressions and Latinized forms as *Titus Andronicus.* In Act 4, Scene 1, Titus's grandson helps speechless Lavinia point out a book in her father's library that will tell what happened to her. The book Lavinia chooses is Ovid's *Metamorphoses* with its tragic tale of Philomel who was raped by Tereus, King of Thrace, who then cut out her tongue to prevent her from exposing him. She is finally able to communicate what happened to her. That same book would later turn up as an important part of the plot in *Cymbeline.*

As for the source of the play, Witherspoon writes, "No single and direct source of the story of *Titus Andronicus* has ever been discovered." In other words, Marlowe made it up based on his reading of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and other classical writers which he read at the King's School. But obviously his aim was to create a horror play with lots of blood and mayhem in the style of Seneca whose plays were as full of horrors as the jaded theatergoers of Nero's Rome could take. And the Elizabethans loved it. The play was entered in Henslowe's Diary no less than fifteen times, indicating its popularity and financial success.

The text of the First Folio was printed from the Third Quarto with textual additions, and it actually contains one scene (Act 3, Scene 2) which does not appear in any of the Quartos. Which leads us to believe that Marlowe added the scene while preparing the play for the First Folio. Also, noteworthy is the fact that the play was performed by Pembroke's Men, the company formed by the Countess of Pembroke's husband.

Two Gentlemen of Verona

We next consider *Two Gentlemen of Verona,* a romantic play about what normal people are capable of doing when they fall hopelessly in love. The main protagonists are two friends in Verona, Valentine and Proteus, of whom the latter is in love with Julia. Valentine decides to go to Milan where he falls in love with the Duke's daughter Silvia. But the Duke wants his daughter to marry Thurio, a very wealthy suitor whom Silvia detests. Meanwhile, Valentine and Silvia plan to elope. Proteus's father then decides to send his son to Milan to improve his education, "practice tilts and tournaments, converse with noblemen."

But when Proteus arrives in Milan, he too falls in love with Silvia. Julia hears of this and decides to go to Milan disguised as a boy. Meanwhile, having learned of Valentine's plan to elope, Proteus betrays his friend by telling the Duke of the planned elopement. Valentine is then banished by the Duke. On his way to Mantua he is accosted by three outlaws who persuade him to become their leader. Silvia then decides to go after Valentine. Thurio, Proteus, Julia and the Duke follow in hot pursuit. But they are all captured by the outlaws and taken to Valentine their new leader. You can imagine the rest. Proteus and Julia are reconciled, the Duke approves of Valentine's marriage to Silvia, and the outlaws are pardoned for their good behavior.

The main source of the play is the story of Felix and Felismena in *Diana Enamorado*, a pastoral romance written in Spanish by Jorge de Montemayor, first printed in 1542. A French translation of *Diana* was published in 1578 and 1587. Although *Two Gentlemen* is mentioned by Francis Meres in his *Palladis Tamia*, published in 1598, there is no text of the play other than the one in the First Folio. While scholars are uncertain of when the play was written, a consensus believes it was writtten in 1591–92. A clear indication that it was written by Marlowe are the references to *Hero and Leander* in Act 1, Scene 1:

> *Valentine:* That's on some shallow story of deep love,
> How young Leander cross'd the Hellespont.
> *Proteus:* That's a deep story of a deeper love;
> For he was more than over shoes in love.
> *Valentine:* 'Tis true; for you are over boots in love,
> And yet you never swum the Hellespont.
> [21–26]

Hero and Leander wasn't published until 1598 by Edward Blount. Yet, here it is being discussed by the two protagonists as if they had read it. Only Marlowe, Blount, or Walsingham had access to the unpublished manuscript. There is another reference to *Hero and Leander* in Act 3, Scene 1, when Valentine says:

> Why then, a ladder quaintly made of cords
> To cast up with a pair of anchoring hooks,
> Would serve to scale another Hero's tower,
> So bold Leander would adventure it.
> [117–120]

It should be noted that Valentine had a page who functioned as a useful go-between. Also, in Act 2, Scene 3, Launce provides us with an amusing discourse on shoes: "This shoe is my father...." Was this a reference to Marlowe's father's profession?

The Taming of the Shrew

The Taming of the Shrew is believed to have been written in 1593, but its first printing was in the First Folio of 1623. However, there is a second play with almost the same title, *The Taming of A Shrew*. Thomas G. Bergin, editor of the Yale edition comments:

> *A Shrew* was published in 1594, and Henslowe's Diary notes, for June of that same year, a performance of a play of that name by Lord Chamberlain's servants (i.e. Shakespeare's company) at Newington Butts. *A Shrew* is made of coarser stuff than *The Shrew;* it is by comparison of unpolished texture, and the characterization is cruder; indeed it is by nature a farce.... P. Alexander (in the *Times Literary Supplement*, Sept. 16, 1926), holds that the printed version of *A Shrew* is a memorial reconstruction (i.e. a version taken down from the memorization of actors) of the play that we know as *The Shrew*; explaining the differences above

noted as adaptations deemed necessary for the presentation before provincial audiences.

The title page of the 1594 Quarto of *The Taming of a Shrew* informs us that it was "sundry times acted by the Right honourable the Earle of Pembroke his Servants."

A.L. Rowse comments in *The Annotated Shakespeare* (p. 117): "The *Shrew* was originally a Pembroke's play, a troupe for which Marlowe was also writing."

Who wrote *The Taming of the Shrew?* Again, we find Marlowe's clues throughout the play. The theme of the play, the battle of the sexes, the manifestations of love, are found in much of Marlowe's writings, from his translation of Ovid's *Amores* to his poetic masterpiece *Hero and Leander.* Perhaps the most tell-tale clue in the play is the reference in Act 2, Scene 1, to the Catholic Seminary at Rheims, which Marlowe had infiltrated as a spy for Sir Francis Walsingham. A. L. Rowse writes (p. 117):

> A reference to Rheims reminds us of Marlowe, who had been sent there to report on the activities of the Catholic exiles. Lucentio "hath been long studying at Rheims"—there is no reason why he should have studied there if Marlowe had not been close by.

We have written that Marlowe was probably hired by Burghley to tutor Lady Arbella Stuart. The Secretary took an interest in her education, not only because she was next in line after James to succeed Elizabeth, but because, like Signor Baptista, he favored women being given the best education possible. Apparently Marlowe drew on his own exasperating experience as a tutor in describing the temperamental Bianca as a pupil. She speaks in Act 3, Scene 1:

> I am no breeching scholar in the schools;
> I'll not be tied to hours nor 'pointed times,
> But learn my lessons as I please myself.
> [18–20]

Marlowe drew on every minute aspect of his own experience to give realism to his plays. He is known to have had an astonishing memory.

In addition, we find Marlowe's handling of dramatic situations uniquely his: the use of witty repartee, as between Petruchio and Katherine, to heighten the sense of conflict and suspense, and his uncanny ability to use dialogue as a means of drawing character.

We should also mention that there is a reference to Ovid, "an outcast quite abjur'd" (33), in Act 1, Scene 1. Also, in the same scene we find a discussion of Marlowe's famous idea of "love at first sight" when Tranio asks his master Lucentio:

> I pray, sir, tell me, is it possible
> That love should of a sudden take such hold?
> *Lucentio.* O Tranio! Till I found it to be true
> I never thought it possible or likely.

But see, while idly I stood looking on,
I found the effect of love in idleness
And now in plainness do confess to thee,
That art to me as secret and as dear
As Anna to the Queen of Carthage was,
Tranio, I burn, I pine, I perish, Tranio,
If I achieve not this young modest girl.
[151–161]

Note the reference to Dido Queen of Carthage and her sister Anna with whom she shared her secrets. Also note in Act I, Scene I, where the Lord invites the players to dine in the buttery, similar to the buttery at Cambridge where Marlowe and his fellow students partook of their meals. And in order to play a practical joke on Christopher Sly, a sleeping drunk, he orders his page Barthol'mew to dress as a lady and pretend to be the drunkard's wife. Is Marlowe commenting on what pages were required to do for their masters? We believe that Marlowe himself was a page and traveled to Italy with Sir Philip Sidney. The play mentions Padua, "nursery of arts," "fruitful Lumbardy, the pleasant garden of great Italy," Pisa, "renowned for grave citizens." Padua had a famous university which Philip Sidney visited during his Continental tour with his young page. Francis Walsingham studied at the university during his Marian exile. As far as we know, Shakespeare never traveled to Italy.

Love's Labour's Lost

The next play in the generally accepted chronology is *Love's Labour's Lost.* Based on internal evidence, most scholars believe that it was written during the plague years of 1592–93 when the theatres were closed. A. L. Rowse writes (p. 172):

> It has long been realised that this play was originally written for private performance. It is full of topicalities, references to contemporary events and characters.... It is full of private jokes and allusions.... The play is an acutely private one.

As for the source of the play, Wilber L. Cross and Tucker Brooke, editors of the Yale Shakespeare edition, write (p. 127):

> The central idea of *Love's Labour's Lost*—that a scholarly prince binds himself and his chosen associates to a quasi-monastic scheme of life, which is immediately shattered by the intrusion of amorous sentiments—would seem much too obvious to be the original invention of Shakespeare, yet no earlier work, either of fiction or of history, has been discovered which can reasonably be regarded as a source of the play.

Harold Bloom writes (p. 121):

> *Love's Labour's Lost* is a festival of language, an exuberant fireworks display in which Shakespeare seems to seek the limits of his verbal resources, and discovers

> that there are none. Even John Milton and James Joyce, the greatest masters of sound and sense in the English language after Shakespeare, are far outdone by the linguistic exuberance of *Love's Labour's Lost.*

It is hard to believe that a man with no known education could have written this highly literate play. It was obviously written by a university man with a sharp critical eye who had spent six years at Cambridge in the midst of scholars and pedants and knew of their idiosyncrasies, pomposity, ignorance, and hypocrisies. That writer was Marlowe. He even pulls our leg when he puts the word "honorificabilitudinitatibus" in the mouth of a character in Act 5, Scene 1. Concerning Marlowe's influence, the editors of the Yale edition write (p. 131):

> It is not unlikely that the play is also related superficially to Marlowe's *Massacre at Paris* (written toward the end of 1589), in which the historical Navarre and Dumaine are both introduced, and which opens with Navarre's marriage to the Princess of France.... The opening speech of the King shows the influence of Marlowe's versification in its special sonorousness, alliteration, and exhilaration. Compare with the present line in Marlowe's *Dido*, 1. 730: "Lest I be made a wonder to the world."

Marlowe provides comic relief with the introduction of Constable Dull and Costard, a Clown. The King describes the visiting Don Adriano de Armado as "a refined traveller of Spain, a man in all the world's new fashion planted, that hath a mint of phrases in his brain.... I love to hear him lie, and I will use him for my minstrelsy."

Don Armado and his page Moth enter in Act 1, Scene 2. Both engage in a witty repartee which is the hallmark of Marlowe's conversational dialogue. Don Armado was a take-off on some well-known personality whose identity has been the subject of much speculation. But most of the play is about the King and the Princess and the lords and ladies. The author's genius is in his ability to dramatize the male-female dynamic in an entertaining, humorous, and philosophical way. And the final outcome is by no means predictable. But the lesson is learned, and Berowne spells it out in these lines from a brilliant speech in Act 4, Scene 3:

> Learning is but an adjunct to ourself,
> And where we are our learning likewise is:
> Then when ourselves we see in ladies' eyes,
> Do we not likewise see our learning there? ...
> But love, first learned in a lady's eyes,
> Lives not alone immured in the brain,
> But, with the motion of all elements ...
> Never durst poet touch a pen to write
> Until his ink were temper'd with Love's sighs....
> From women's eyes this doctrine I derive:
> They sparkle still the right Promethean fire;
> They are the books, the arts, the academes,
> That show, contain, and nourish all the world;
> Else none at all in aught proves excellent.

Never has heterosexual love been better examined philosophically than in *Love's Labour's Lost*. Yet, Marlowe has been characterized by many biographers as a homosexual. They have taken the attacks and accusations of his enemies as proof. Yet there is nothing in Marlowe's plays or poems that suggest that he was in any way homosexual. His relationship with Thomas Walsingham was platonic, that is, nonsexual. The use of the word "love" in exchanges between males in those days had nothing to do with sex. In *Edward II* he wrote of a homosexual king whose predilections led to his tragic downfall. The purpose of the play was to provide reflection on what might happen should homosexual King James of Scotland become King of England. This was a burning issue with Burghley.

In addition, there is a scene in *Hero and Leander* in which Leander rejects the homosexual advances of Neptune. While swimming across the Hellespont, Leander replies to Neptune who wishes to make love to him:

> "You are deceived, I am no woman, I."
> Thereat smiled Neptune, and then told a tale,
> How that a shepherd, sitting in a vale,
> Played with a boy so fair and kind,
> As for his love both earth and heaven pined.
> [Sestiad II. 192–196]

So where did this reputation of Marlowe being homosexual come from? It came from a campaign of vilification based on rumor and false information about his supposed violent death. It came from Richard Baines's note "containing the opinion of one Christopher Marly Concerning his Damnable Judgment of Religion and scorn of gods word." It came from Catholics who detested Marlowe because he spied on them. It came from Richard Cholmeley who not only accused Marlowe of atheism but stated that he, Cholmeley, would have killed the Lord Treasurer, Burghley, with his own hands had he the opportunity. Cholmeley accused the entire Privy Council of being atheists and Machiavellians, "especially my Lord Admirall." And finally, the vilification came from Puritans who would have liked to ban the theaters altogether. Charles Norman writes in *The Muse's Darling* (p. 243):

> The outburst of Puritan wrath against Marlowe is without parallel in literature. No vile epithet was too vile for his detractors to use, yet most of them wrote only from hearsay, or merely embroidered one another's accounts, hardly one able to contain his gloating.

Could an atheist have written *Doctor Faustus*? T.W. Baldwin writes in *On the Compositional Genetics of The Comedy of Errors* (p. 367):

> From Shakspere's first play to his last, God's providence, as the way of God to man, is upon occasion specifically invoked.... Whether Shakspere refers directly to the doctrine of God's providence or not, it was a fundamental, if not the fundamental, doctrine of the universe.

Hardly the view of an atheist. And the reason why Shakespeare never experienced the vilification suffered by Marlowe is that he was just a name on some

poems and plays, he made no public statements, was not the subject of public controversy, and had no relations with the powers that be. He was not connected with the Essex cabal nor with the Ralegh circle. He was not even known as a writer among fellow writers, and his name is nowhere to be found in Henslowe's diary.

Considering the opprobrium associated with Marlowe's name at the time, Thomas Walsingham and Blount must have thought it a good idea to use Shakespeare's name wherever necessary. And apparently the actor-businessman benefited financially from the scheme, for in 1597 he was able to purchase the second largest house in Stratford.

Romeo and Juliet

It is believed by most scholars that this universally celebrated love story was written in 1594. But oddly enough, Shakespeare's name does not appear on any of the Quartos published before the appearance of the First Folio. Harold Bloom writes (p. 89): "'*Romeo and Juliet*' is unmatched, in Shakespeare and the world's literature, as a vision of an uncompromising mutual love that perishes of its own idealism and intensity.... [T]he play is the largest and most persuasive celebration of romantic love in Western literature."

And the play has many Marlowe fingerprints. First, there is the mentioning of Dido and Hero, two important Marlowe heroines, by Mercutio in his ruthless but witty panning of romantic love in Act 2, Scene 4: "Dido a dowdy, Cleopatra a gypsy, Helen and Hero hildings and harlots. Thisbe a grey eye or so but not to the purpose" (43–45).

Then there is a reiteration of that constant theme in Marlowe of "love at first sight," which both Romeo and Juliet experience at a party given by her father. Romeo says: "Sight! For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night" (1.5. 54–55). Juliet's experience is just as instant.

As for the dueling scenes between the Capulets and Montagues in which Tybalt kills Mercutio and Romeo kills Tybalt, A. L. Rowse writes (p. 1605):

> Though a modern mind may find the feud between the Montagues and Capulets adolescent, it was utterly true of the age.... Marlowe's friend, the poet and musician Thomas Watson, came to Marlowe's aid in his affray with William Bradley and killed him.

Another interesting allusion to the authorship question is Juliet's remarks when she is told that Romeo is a Montague. She tells him:

> 'Tis but thy name that is my enemy.
> Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.
> What's Montague? It is nor hand nor foot
> Nor arm nor face, nor any other part
> Belonging to a man. Oh, be some other name!

What's in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet.
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo called,
Retain that dear perfection which he owes
Without that title.

[2.2. 38–47]

Marlowe had no choice but to accept someone else's name on his works. The name did not change the fact that he had written them.

Another painful experience Marlowe wrote of was his exile and banishment, which Romeo also experiences when the Prince banishes him from Verona after the killing of Tybalt. On being told of his banishment, Romeo exclaims:

There is no world without Verona walls,
But Purgatory, torture, Hell itself.
Hence banished is banished from the world,
And world's exile is death.

[3.3. 17–20]

We also find another Marlowesque faked death and resurrection in the play when the Friar gives Juliet a drug that will put her into a temporary death-like state that will continue for forty-two hours, after which she will awake "as from a pleasant sleep." However, when Romeo is falsely told that Juliet is actually dead, he buys a dram of poison from an apothecary "That will disperse itself through all the veins That the life-weary taker may fall dead." When he finally enters the tomb and sees Juliet so beautiful in death (her sleep was to last several hours longer), Romeo is ready to die:

Eyes look your last,
Arms take your last embrace, and lips (O you
The doors of breath) seal with a righteous kiss
A dateless bargain to engrossing Death!
Come bitter conduct, come unsav'ry guide,
Thou desp'rate pilot, now at once run on
The dashing rocks thy seasick weary bark.
Here's to my love! O true apothecary,
Thy drugs are quick. Thus with a kiss I die.

[5.3. 112–120]

Marlowe was very knowledgeable of the use of poisons. We find them in *The Jew of Malta*, *The Massacre at Paris*, and *Hamlet*.

The Friar also reiterates Marlowe's ever constant theme of "love at first sight" when he tells Romeo, "Young men's love then lies Not truly in their hearts but in their eyes" (2.3. 67–68).

As for the play's publication, an unauthorized Quarto of the play was first published in 1597, but Shakespeare's name does not appear on its title page, nor does it appear on the Quarto of 1599. It is believed that a playhouse copy of the Quarto was the one used by the publisher of the First Folio. It did not have Shakespeare's name on it. But Blount no doubt knew who had written it.

Richard II

Richard II is a historical drama right out of Holinshed. Like Marlowe's *Edward II*, this play is a story of the deposition of a king and his subsequent murder. While the murder of Edward II is dramatic and psychologically weird, the murder of Richard II is simpler but no less sickening.

We know that Marlowe wrote *Richard II* not only because it echoes *Edward II*, but also because of its exquisite poetry. There is also the theme of banishment and exile. When Mowbury is sentenced to permanent exile by King Richard, he laments:

> A heavy sentence, my most sovereign liege,
> And all unlook'd for from your highness' mouth.
> A dearer merit, not so deep a maim
> As to be cast forth in the common air,
> Have I deserved at your highness's hands.
> The language I have learnt these forty years,
> My native English, now I must forgo; ...
> Within my mouth you have enjail'd my tongue....
> What is thy sentence then but speechless death,
> Which robs my tongue from breathing native breath? ...
> [1.3. 154–160, 166, 172–173]

How much more eloquent could Marlowe have been about his own agonies of exile? When Richard banishes Bullingbrooke from England for six years, the latter, as he goes into exile, remarks:

> Then, England's ground, farewell; sweet soil, adieu,
> My mother, and my nurse, that bears me yet.
> Where ere I wander, boast of this I can,
> Though banish'd, yet a trueborn Englishman.
> [1.3. 306–309]

This patriotic theme is grandly expressed by Gaunt in Act 2, Scene 1, in a famous speech while on his deathbed. These were clearly Marlowe's thoughts about his beloved country:

> This other Eden, demiparadise,
> This fortress built by Nature for herself
> Against infection and the hand of war,
> This happy breed of men, this little world,
> This precious stone set in the silver sea....
> This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England ...
> [2.1. 42–46, 50]

There is no doubt that Marlowe had a deep love of his country and its magnificent language, which he mastered as no one had before him.

In the play Bullingbrooke deposes King Richard. The scene in which the king is deposed was removed from the play while Elizabeth reigned. She accused the Earl of Essex of having had the play performed to set the stage for his own

rebellion against her. By early February 1601, the plans for the coup were already known by Robert Cecil and the Privy Council. Mary Ann Luke in *Gloriana, The Years of Elizabeth I* writes (p. 669):

> On Friday, February 7, Lord Mounteagle and several others were rowed across the Thames to the Globe Playhouse, where they persuaded the Lord Chamberlain's Players to stage a special performance of *Richard II*. The players complained it "was so old and so long out of use" that only a forty-shilling guarantee induced them to stage the play in which the Divine right of Kings is questioned and a King is eventually deposed. Presumably the play would whet public acceptance of Essex's coup.

When Essex launched the attempted coup, he thought that he would have popular support. But he did not. His failure led to a momentous trial where the former favorite was accused of treason, found guilty, and finally beheaded on February 25. The prosecutor for the state was ironically none other than Essex's devoted friend Francis Bacon.

According to biographer Jasper Ridley, later that summer, on August 4, 1601, Elizabeth received the historian William Lambarde in her privy chamber at Greenwich. He presented the Queen with a copy of his book on English history. She perused it at length. When she came to the passages dealing with Richard II, she said: "I am Richard II, know ye not that?" The historian said that this wicked suggestion had been made by a most unkind gentleman. She replied, "He that will forget God will also forget his benefactors."

Who was the author who had forgotten God? It certainly wasn't William Shakespeare who hadn't said anything in public about belief in God. It was obviously Christopher Marlowe who was reputed to have forgotten God. She probably knew that he was alive, for she had done her part in facilitating Burghley's plan at Deptford. In any case, nothing seems to have been done about the play during or after Essex's trial.

On 18 February 1601, the actor Augustine Phillips was examined by Chief Justice Popham about the performance of *Richard II*. Phillips admitted that the company was paid by rebel sympathizers to stage the play, but he made it clear that none of the players took part in Essex's rebellion. Thus, no action was taken against William Shakespeare or the players. Apparently it was understood that Shakespeare was not the author of the play even though his name appeared on the Quarto of 1598 as author.

There are other echoes of Marlowe in the play. In the famous abdication scene, Richard asks for a mirror. He is given one, looks into it and says:

> Was this the face
> That every day under his household roof
> Did keep ten thousand men? Was this the face
> That, like the sun, did make beholders wink?
> [5.1. 281–285]

Does this not remind us of the most famous line in *Doctor Faustus*, when the Doctor asks Mephistophilis to bring him Helen of Troy, and when she appears, he asks: "Was this the face that launch'd a thousand ships?"

A Midsummer Night's Dream

From all that we know, this incredibly stunning play originated in the mind of the author. According to Willard Higley Durham, editor of the Yale edition of the play, "nothing has been found which may properly be called the 'source' of *A Midsummer Night's Dream.*"

Harold Bloom writes (p. 148): "Nothing by Shakespeare before *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is its equal, and in some respects nothing by him afterward surpasses it. It is his first undoubted masterwork, without flaw, and one of his dozen or so plays of overwhelming originality and power."

As we have speculated, the play, written about 1595, may have been based on Elizabeth's progress at Kenilworth, which we believe Marlowe witnessed as a page. It was an extraordinary event which must have left an indelible impression on his young mind. The whole event was staged by the Earl of Leicester, Philip Sidney's uncle. In Act 2, Scene 1, there is a reference to Queen Elizabeth, "a fair vestal throned by the west" (58). Editor Durham of the Yale Shakespeare comments in a note on page 83:

> It is fairly certain that the "fair vestal throned by the west" is Queen Elizabeth. The imagery of the whole passage was very likely suggested by the allegorical figures which appeared in the pageants and "triumphs" of the day, and it is not impossible that there is a specific reference to the "Princely Pleasures" with which the Earl of Leicester entertained Queen Elizabeth at Kenilworth in 1575.

The story takes place in ancient Athens where King Theseus and Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons, will wed in four days when the new moon appears. The King tells his Master of Revels to "Stir up the Athenian youth to merriment, Awake the pert and nimble spirit of Mirth" (1.1. 12).

A citizen by the name of Egeus comes before the King with his daughter Hermia and her two suitors, Lysander and Demetrius. Hermia is in love with Lysander, but her father wants her to marry Demetrius. The King proclaims that under Athenian law, she must obey her father and marry Demetrius or face death or a future life as a nun. The King gives Hermia four days in which to make up her mind.

When Hermia and Lysander are alone, he tells her that he has a wealthy aunt who lives beyond Athens' jurisdiction and that they must secretly go there in order to marry. They plan to meet in the wood outside of town. Hermia speaks:

> My good Lysander!
> I swear to thee by Cupid's strongest bow ...
> And by that fire which burn'd the Carthage queen,
> When the false Troyan under sail was seen,
> By all the vows that ever men have broke,
> In number more than ever women spoke,
> In that same place thou hast appointed me,
> To-morrow truly will I meet thee.
> [1.1. 168–169, 173–178]

Note the reference to Dido, Queen of Carthage, and the fact that the initials of Hermia and Lysander are the same as Hero and Leander.

The play has all of the elements of a great fairy tale, plus scenes of high comedy as a group of rustic amateurs rehearse a play to be performed in celebration of the marriage of the King and Hippolyta. Marlowe satirizes how plays are put on, how parts are assigned, and how some amateur actors try to play all of the roles. His portrayal of amateur theatrics reveals his understanding of human vanity which anyone will find in summer stock in our day.

A subsidiary plot involves Oberon, King of the Fairies, and his Queen Titania, who has left Oberon because of his extramarital affairs. They quarrel over Titania's changeling boy, whom Oberon wants to be his page of honor. But Titania refuses to give him up.

Puck, Oberon's chief fairy, produces much mischief by bringing the four Athenian lovers into total confusion over who loves whom with the use of magic herbs. He also uses the herb on Bottom, so that the rustic actor will acquire the head of an ass. And he manages to have Titania fall in love with him, which produces great hilarity in the audience.

If we believe that the author of this fantastic play was Christopher Marlowe, then we can understand the depth of the poet's genius. The actor-businessman could have never conceived of nor written anything so profoundly original and philosophical. Also, in the speech in which Bottom reveals that he has had "a most rare vision," he parodies the Geneva Bible's rendering of 1st Corinthians 2:9–10 and the text of the Bishops' Bible:

> The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report, what my dream was. I will get Peter Quince to write a ballad of this dream: it shall be called Bottom's Dream, because it hath no bottom; ...

Marlowe, who had access to these Bibles at Corpus Christi, would have known how to make pleasant use of these passages. Nor should we forget Puck's immortal line: "Lord, what fools these mortals be!" (3.2. 115).

Concerning Bottom's Dream, Ron Rosenbaum writes in *The Shakespeare Wars* (p. 14): "There's much more to Bottom's Dream than meets the eye; it deserves deeper consideration than its comic context suggests." Indeed, Shakespearean scholars have suggested that Bottom's Dream is really a veiled reference to "the bottom of God's secrets."

Equally philosophical are the remarks made by Theseus in Act 5, Scene 1:

> Lovers and madmen have such seething brains, ...
> The lunatic, the lover, and the poet,
> Are of imagination all compact:
> One sees more devils than vast Hell can hold,
> That is the madman; the lover, all as frantic,
> Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt:
> The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
> Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;

> And, as imagination bodies forth
> The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
> Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
> A local habitation and a name.
> [5.1. 4–17]

No analyst of the imagination could come up with a better description of how the writer can give shape and name to "forms of things unknown." And, of course, it was Marlowe, who understood the poet's creative power, speaking through the Athenian king.

Although *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was listed by Meres in *Palladis Tamia,* it wasn't until 1600 that a Quarto was published with Shakespeare named as author.

The Life and Death of King John

King John has all of the hallmarks of a Marlowe play. It is believed to have been written around 1590. Harold Bloom writes (p. 58):

> There is something curiously antithetical about *King John,* with much in it that is Marlovian rant, yet much more that is very subtle and memorable. I associate this mystery of the play with the greatest mystery in Shakespeare, which is the missing first *Hamlet* .... The common mystery is the nature of Shakespeare's complex apprenticeship to Marlowe's example, the only influence relationship that ever troubled the greatest and ultimately the most original of all writers.

A very peculiar statement, inasmuch as neither Marlowe nor Shakespeare ever knew or worked with one another. Since Shakespeare was not a writer, there was no apprenticeship.

Typical of Marlowe, the play opens with the conflict between King John of England and King Philip of France clearly stated in the opening lines. Philip demands that King John cede his sovereignty to his young nephew, Arthur Plantagenet, who, as the son of John's elder brother, is by right the lawful sovereign. King John rejects the demand: "Here we have war for war, and blood for blood" (1.1. 19).

Meanwhile, the two Faulconbridge brothers come before King John for a judgment about their inheritance. Robert, the younger son of Sir Robert Faulconbridge, accuses his older brother Philip of being a bastard and thereby ineligible for any inheritance. He claims that his father revealed all of this to him on his deathbed. But the Queen Mother notices Philip's resemblance to her son Cordelion. She asks him whether he would rather be a Faulconbridge or the reputed son of Cordelion? Philip decides to cede his inheritance to his brother and accept the status offered by King John who then knights him as Sir Richard and Plantagenet. The Queen is pleased and tells Richard, "I am thy grandam, Richard; call me so." Thereafter he is known as Bastard.

Later, when Richard confronts his mother about his real father, she con-

fesses that it was indeed Cordeleon who seduced her. Richard is overjoyed with this confirmation and tells his mother:

> Madam, I would not wish a better father....
> With all my heart I thank thee for my father!
> [2.1. 260, 270]

Did the Countess of Pembroke ever tell her son William who his real father was? All we know is that the Sonnets were dedicated to W.H.—William Herbert—and perhaps that is why they were not included in the First Folio.

In the course of battle, King John captures the young Arthur Plantagenet, who is claimed by his mother to be the rightful king. King John orders the boy to be put to death, and tells the executioners to prepare hot irons.

The use of hot irons in this plan to murder Arthur makes us immediately think of the execution scene in *Edward II*, where a hot iron was used to kill Edward. Marlowe was extremely adept at creating gruesome murder scenes that riveted the audience in spine-tingling suspense.

Marlowe also used a variety of characters in his plays through which he could express his own opinions. In *King John*, the Bastard fills that role. In a famous rant, he says:

> Mad world! Mad kings! Mad composition!
> John, to stop Arthur's title to the whole,
> Hath willingly departed with a part,
> And France, whose armour conscience buckled on,
> Whom zeal and charity brought to the field
> As God's own soldier, rounded in the ear
> With that same purpose-changer, that sly devil,
> That broker, that still breaks the pate of faith,
> That daily break-vow, he that wins all ...
> That smooth-faced gentleman, tickling Commodity,
> Commodity, the bias of the world....
> And why rail I on this Commodity?
> But for because he hath not woo'd me yet....
> Well, whiles I am a beggar, I will rail
> And say there is no sin but to be rich;
> And being rich, my virtue then shall be
> To say there is no vice but beggary.
> Since kings break faith upon Commodity,
> Gain, be my lord, for I will worship thee!
> [2.1. 561–598]

Commodity referred to the economic system in which royal favor played an important role in determining who became rich. Obviously, Marlowe had much to say on the subject and was able to do it through Bastard, who was an outsider like he, owned no land, and lived in near poverty. While Marlowe was paid something by the Secret Service for his work as an intelligence agent, he had to keep writing plays in order to earn more money. The idea that the plays were written as art-for-art's sake ignores the economic factor that motivated him.

When the Pope excommunicates King John, the king orders Bastard to return to England and plunder the Pope's monasteries and abbeys. Bastard replies:

> Bell, book, and candle shall not drive me back
> When gold and silver becks me to come on.
> [3.3. 12–13]

One of the most moving passages in the play is spoken by Arthur's mother, Constance, who is overcome by grief at the capture of her son:

> Grief fills the room up of my absent child,
> Lies in his bed, walks up and down with me,
> Puts on his pretty looks, repeats his words,
> Remembers me of all his gracious parts,
> Stuffs out his vacant garments with his form:
> Then I have reason to be fond of grief....
> O Lord! My boy, my Arthur, my fair son!
> My life, my joy, my food, my all the world!
> My widow-comfort, and my sorrows' cure!
> [3.4. 93–98, 103–105]

There are few passages in all of literature that express a mother's love and pain more eloquently than this one. If we believe that William Henry, the Earl of Pembroke, was Marlowe's son, then we can understand why the Sonnets were dedicated to him.

The publication history of *King John* is of great interest. The play as it appears in the First Folio is a revision of an earlier play written about 1589 and published anonymously in London in 1591. This earlier version was also published as late as 1622 in Quarto. Yet a revision was made for the First Folio. Who did the revision? Marlowe, no doubt. Evidence that Marlowe wrote the earlier version is a passage spoken by Arthur's mother, Constance, lamenting the loss of her child. Heartbroken, she says: "Let Dido sigh, and say she weeps again to hear the wrack of Troy." Another mention of Dido in another First Folio play.

But we are still stuck with the question of when the revised *King John* was written. Meres mentions the play in his *Palladis Tamia* of 1598. But there is no record of a performance between 1598 and 1642. So, which play was Meres referring to: the old play or the revised play?

If the old play were revised after 1616, then the reviser would have had to be Marlowe. That in itself would be incontrovertible proof that Marlowe was alive at the time.

The Merchant of Venice

The comparison between *The Merchant of Venice* and Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* is inescapable. In Act 4, Scene 1, we find Shylock referring to Barabas, saying: "I have a daughter; Would any of the stock of Barabas had been her

husband than a Christian!" (295–297). When Shylock's daughter runs off with Lorenzo, her Christian boyfriend, Shylock cries:

> My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!
> Fled with a Christian! O my Christian ducats!
> [2.8. 15–16]

Which immediately reminds us of Barabas in *The Jew of Malta* who exclaims:

> O my girl!
> My gold, my fortune, my felicity...
> O girl! O gold! O beauty! O my bliss!
> [2.1. 50–51, 57]

In Act 5, Scene 1, we find Lorenzo referring to Dido. He says:

> In such a night
> Stood Dido with a willow in her hand
> Upon the wild sea-banks, and waft of her love
> To come again to Carthage.
> [5.1. 9–12]

As for the source of the play, William Lyon Phelps, editor of the Yale edition of the play, writes (p. 106):

> The chief source is probably an Italian work, *Il Pecorone*, written in 1378 by Giovanni Fiorentino, and published in 1565. No English translation of this is extant.... *Il Pecorone* is a collection of tales, and one of them has the story of a rich woman at Belmont, who is eventually married to a young gentleman, whose friend, in order to lend him money, had come within the danger of an avaricious Jew, who demanded as surety a pound of flesh.

Since we have no indication that Shakespeare could read Italian, he could not have written this play. Marlowe had a facility for learning languages, and we can be sure that he could read Italian, since we believe that he was in Italy and visited Venice as a page with Philip Sidney.

A Quarto edition of the play was published in 1600, which is substantially the text used in the First Folio of 1623.

Much has been written by modern scholars and critics about the anti-Semitism in the play. It is obvious that *The Merchant of Venice* was written as an entertainment with no cosmic or transcendental message concerning the relationships between Christians and Jews. While it is true that Jews were being persecuted in Europe, there were no Jews in England. Barabas and Shylock were colorful and somewhat exotic characters out of the Old Testament. The Jews were no threat to the state, while Catholics and Protestants were locked in a life-and-death power struggle for control of kingdoms.

The Huguenots in France were being far more ferociously persecuted by the Catholics than were the Jews. The massacre at Paris attests to that. The Puritans were forced to emigrate to the wilderness of North America because of their persecution by the established church. Bloody Mary had burned Protestants at

the stake during her reign. And Catholics were being watched and restrained in England by Walsingham and Lord Burghley. So the attitude of Christians toward Jews during that period was simply a part of the general religious conflicts and prejudices of the time. Both Barabas and Shylock were stereotypical caricatures of Jews as villains. They made good theater.

In any case, in all probability, both Barabas and Shylock were the product of one brain, Marlowe's.

Henry IV, Part One

If you believe that *Richard II* was written by Marlowe, then you must believe that *Henry IV, Parts One and Two,* and *Henry V* were also written by Marlowe, for they are all one long story. For example, in the closing scene of *Richard II,* when Bullingbrooke (Henry IV) has learned of Richard's murder by his man Exton, he is overwhelmed by remose and vows:

> I'll make a voyage to the Holy Land
> To wash this blood off my guilty hand.
> [5.6. 49–50]

That theme is picked up in the first scene in *Henry IV, Part One,* where Henry IV is forced to put off his trip to the Holy Land because of a brewing rebellion. He says:

> It seems that the tidings of this broil
> Brake off our business for the Holy Land...
> And for this cause a while we must neglect
> Our holy purpose to Jerusalem.
> [1.1. 47–48, 101–102]

Also, Bullingbrooke's concern for his wayward son Hal is revealed in Act 5, Scene 3 of *Richard II,* when he tells Percy:

> Can no man tell me of my unthrifty son?
> 'Tis full three months since I did see him last.
> If any plague hang over us, 'tis he.
> I would to God, my lords, he might be found.
> Inquire at London, 'mongst the taverns there,
> For there, they say, he daily doth frequent,
> With unrestrained loose companions,
> Even such, they say, as stand in narrow lanes
> And beat our watch and rob our passengers,
> Which he, young and wanton and effeminate boy,
> Takes on the point of honor to support
> So dissolute a crew.
> [5.3. 1–12]

Of course, the "dissolute crew" included Sir John Falstaff, who had become the beloved friend of the Prince, all of whom we shall meet in *Henry IV, Part*

One. Falstaff is one of the great original characters of the author, about whom much has been written by critics and scholars. Marlowe's genius was in his ability to create immortal characters that will live as long as civilization exists.

It is obvious that the reason why Marlowe brought the Falstaff-Hal relationship into the play is that it not only added much-needed humor but also provided witty philosophical commentary in an historical drama that could have been extremely dull for a theater audience. Falstaff was a free spirit in a society regulated by the Monarchy, the Nobility, the Church, and the Universities, all very rigid institutions. Falstaff was the philosophical inconoclast who could dialogue with the Prince in normal street language. The audiences loved it.

A.L. Rowse writes in *The Annotated Shakespeare* (p. 115):

> Falstaff is at the Antipodes from Hotspur: he is a coward, but he is certainly no fool. Take the point of honour, for which Hotspur would throw away his life. On the battlefield Falstaff catechises the concept thus:
>
> Can honour set a leg? No. Or an arm? No. Or take away the grief of a wound? No. Honour hath no skill in surgery then? No. What is honour? A word. What is that word honour? Air. A trim reckoning! Who hath it? He that died a-Wednesday. Doth he feel it? No. Doth he hear it? No. 'Tis insensible then? Yes, to the dead. But will it not live with the living? No.... Therefore I'll none of it. Honour is a mere scutcheon....

It is this kind of iconoclastic philosophizing that made Falstaff one of the playwright's most popular and beloved characters.

Much to the chagrin of the king, Hal is sowing his wild oats with the old reprobate Falstaff and his companions. Hal, the future Henry V, is not joyous like Falstaff. Even though he joins them in their pranks, he is quite detached from them, cool, controlled, and contemptuous. He is a political type like his father, which he reveals by telling the crew:

> I know you all, and will awhile uphold
> The unyoked humour of your idleness....
> If all the year were playing-holidays,
> To sport would be as tedious as to work;
> But when they seldom come, they wish'd for come,
> And nothing pleaseth but rare accidents.
> So when this loose behaviour I throw off
> And pay the debt I never promised,
> By how much better than my word I am...
> My reformation, glittering o'er my fault,
> shall show more goodly, and attract more eyes
> Than which hath no foil to set it off.
>
> [1.2. 218–238]

When Hal is finally reconciled with his father, he goes off to Shrewsbury to fight Hotspur and put down the rebellion. The Prince encounters Hotspur on the battlefield and kills him. Meanwhile, Northumberland and the prelate Scroop have armed themselves to continue the rebellion. The King assigns his son John

to go after them, while he and Harry will go towards Wales to fight Glendower and Mortimer, the Earl of March. And on that note, the play ends.

How do we know that Marlowe wrote the play? First, it was included in the First Folio by Edward Blount, who knew the true author of the plays. Second, it follows the same style as the earlier historical plays. There is a continuity of style from *Henry VI, Part One* to *Henry V.* Also notable is that the embryo of Falstaff can be found in the cowardly character John Fastolfe in Act 3, Scene 2, of *Henry VI, Part One:*

> *Captain.* Whither away, Sir John Fastolfe, in such haste?
> *Fastolfe.* Whither away? To save myself by flight–
> We are like to have the overthrow again.
> *Captain.* What? Will you fly, and leave Lord Talbot?
> *Fastolfe.* Ay, all the Talbots in the world, to save my life.
> *Captain.* Cowardly knight, ill fortune follow thee.
> [3.2. 104–109]

It is believed that *Henry IV, Part One* was written in 1597. A Quarto was published in 1598, and there is little difference between it and the text published in the First Folio.

Henry IV, Part Two

The play opens with the Earl of Northumberland being informed that his beloved son Hotspur has been killed in the battle of Shrewsbury. He vows revenge by joining with the Archbishop of York in an attempt to unseat King Henry, who is prompted to remark: "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown" (3.1. 31).

But the forces against the King realize that they cannot win and thus they accept the Earl of Westmoreland's offer of peace. They dismiss their forces, after which Westmoreland arrests them all for treason and has them executed.

With all of the rebellions quashed, King Henry IV becomes ill. He is taken to his bed and falls asleep. Prince Henry enters the chamber alone. He sees that the king has placed his crown on the pillow beside him. He assumes that his sleeping father is dead and puts the crown on his head, claiming this lineal honor. He then leaves the room. The king awakens and calls Warwick, Gloucester and Clarence. "Where is the crown? Who took it from my pillow?" They find the Prince and bring him back to his father. What ensues is a wonderful and moving conversation between father and son. The King rebukes him for all the troubles he has caused him over the years. The Prince kneels and explains why he put the crown on his head. King Henry, deeply moved, tells his son:

> Come hither, Harry, sit thou by my bed,
> And hear, I think, the very latest counsel
> That ever I shall breathe. God knows, my son,
> By what by-paths and indirect crook'd ways
> I met this crown, and I myself know well
> How troublesome it sat upon my head.

To thee it shall descend with better quiet,
Better opinion, better confirmation,
For all the soil of the achievement goes
With me into the earth....
How I came by the crown, O God forgive,
And grant it may with thee in true peace live!
[4.5. 182–191, 219–220]

The King dies and Prince Harry becomes Henry V. All of the serious scenes are interspersed with the comic antics of Falstaff, Pistol, Bardolf, Justice Shallow, Justice Silent, Mouldy, Shadow, Feeble, Wart and the ladies. When Falstaff is informed that Hal has become King, he is overjoyed and decides to go to London with Shallow and Pistol to see their beloved Hal. They reach Westminster just as the Coronation has ended and the new King and his train are departing. When Falstaff sees the King about to pass by, he exclaims:

God save thy Grace, King Hal, my royal Hal!
Pistol. The heavens thee guard and keep, most royal imp of fame!
Falstaff. God save thee, my sweet boy!
King Henry. My Lord Chief Justice, speak to that vain man.
Chief Justice. Have you no wits? Know you what 'tis you speak?
Falstaff. My King! My Jove! I speak to thee, my heart!
King Henry. I know thee not, old man. Fall to thy prayers....
Reply not to me with a fool-born jest;
Presume not that I am the thing I was;
For God doth know, so shall the world perceive,
That I have turn'd away from my former self.
[5.5.43–51, 59–62]

Thus ends the special relationship between Prince Hal and Falstaff.

Did Marlowe leave any clues in this play? Pistol makes a direct reference to Marlowe's *Tamburlaine II* in Act 2, Scene 4, by paraphrasing Tamburlaine who has hitched the captive kings of Asia to pull his chariot. Pistol speaks:

Shall pack-horses,
And hollow pamper'd jades of Asia
Which cannot go but thirty mile a day,
Compare with Caesars and with Cannibals,
And Troyant Greeks?
[2.4. 177–181]

Tamburlaine's actual lines are:

Holla, ye pamper'd jades of Asia!
What, can ye draw but twenty miles a-day,
And have so proud a chariot at your heels,
And such a coachman as great Tamburlaine ...
[4.3. 1–4]

Marlowe's fingerprints are found in the very structure of the play in which he makes history live. But as in *Henry IV, Part One*, he provides common humor to entertain an audience who loved it.

It is believed that *Henry IV, Part Two* was written in 1599. It was performed in 1599 by the Chamberlain's Men and printed in a small Quarto in 1600. The Folio text is longer by 1700 lines, indicating that the author did the editing. R. J. Dorius, editor of the Yale edition writes: "The First Folio of 1623 offers us the only good text of the play. It is probably taken from a manuscript in Shakespeare's hand...." Since it is our strongly held opinion that Shakespeare was not a writer, the hand must have been Marlowe's, proving that he was alive in 1623.

Henry V

This is the last of the Henriad plays. It opens with a prologue urging the audience to use its lively imagination in bringing to reality what cannot be seen on the stage. But what can be viewed is a scene with some of Falstaff's old crones. Falstaff's page enters and tells them that his master is very sick. Hostess Quickly remarks, "The king has kill'd his heart." She goes with the page to visit Falstaff. When she returns, she tells them: "Ah, poor heart! He is so shak'd of a burning quotidian tertian that it is most lamentable to behold" (2.1. 123–126). And so, Falstaff dies.

This is a play about war and its justifications. As such, it is very modern. There is the famous scene in which King Henry in disguise wanders among his troops and to find out if his men believe in the soundness of the cause, whether or not it is worth dying for the King. One of the soldiers comments: "But if the cause be not good, the king himself hath a heavy reckoning to make when all those legs and arms and heads chopp'd off in a battle shall join together at the latter day and cry all 'We died at such a place.'"

Was this not the same debate that took place during the war in Vietnam, when many Americans began to question whether or not the cause was worth dying for? LBJ, the American King, said it was. Nevertheless, the public decided against the war and we left Vietnam in defeat. And the war in Iraq has posed the same questions.

But King Henry returns from France a conquering hero. The great victory at Agincourt was won on St. Crispin's day. Who was St. Crispin? He was Patron Saint of cobblers, the Saint who protected and blessed Marlowe's father, the cobbler.

In Act 5, the Chorus informs us that King Henry has returned to England where the people of London welcomed him back as their conquering Caesar. The Chorus then adds:

> As, by a lower but loving likelihood,
> Were now the general of our gracious empress,
> As in good time he may, from Ireland coming,
> Bringing rebellion broached on his sword,
> How many would the peaceful city quit
> To welcome him! Much more, and much more cause,
> Did they this Harry.
> [5. 29–35]

R. J. Dorius, editor of the Yale edition of the play, comments (p. 157):

> Lines 29–34 in the Prologue to Act V compare the glorious return from France of England's "conqu'ring Caesar," King Henry, with that of "the general of our gracious empress" from Ireland, "Bringing rebellion broached on his sword." This general has long been identified with Essex, who left England to establish firmly England's supremacy over Ireland in March 1599 and returned in disgrace the following September. Since public expectation concerning this venture began to wane by June of that year, Shakespeare's high-spirited parallel must have been penned by midsummer.

Since we believe that Marlowe wrote the play, we may ask why did he insert this matter about Essex? Probably because it was rumored that Essex had failed in his mission to destroy the Irish rebellion. Indeed, when he returned from Ireland, he launched his own rebellion against the Queen. Marlowe knew that it was Essex and the Bacon brothers who were behind the attempt to destroy him as their means of undermining the positions of Robert Cecil and Sir Walter Raleigh. But Marlowe and his confederates had managed to outwit Essex. In the end, it would be Essex who would face the executioner's block.

The play also has the most charming courtship scene in all of English literature between King Henry and the French Princess Katherine. It required the author to have a fluent knowledge of French, which Marlowe had.

The more one reviews the plays in the First Folio the more obvious it becomes that Marlowe was alive when the project was planned and carried out. Only he could have done the editing that was needed. In the case of *Henry V*, extensive editing took place. Henry Norman Hudson writes in the New Hudson Shakespeare edition of the play (p. xviii-xx):

> The text of *King Henry the Fifth* in the Quartos is less than half the length of the present accepted text, which is mainly that of the First Folio.... In the Quartos, as the reproductions of the title-pages in this edition show, the author's name is nowhere given, ... the five Chorus-prologues, the whole of the first scene, the first scene of the third act, the second scene of the fourth act, and many other passages, those too among the best in the play, and even in the whole compass of Shakespeare's works, being wanting altogether. All these, besides more or less of enlargement in a great many places, together with the marks of a careful finishing hand running through the whole, were supplied in the First Folio.

Whose "careful finishing hand" ran through the whole of the play to produce the text in the First Folio? The last of the three Quartos was published in 1608. (The Quartos had 1623 lines, the First Folio text 3227 lines.) There would have been no reason to completely redo the play before 1623. It was only the occasion of the publication of the First Folio, the only authorized edition of all the plays, that warranted that careful finishing hand to produce the final finished text. And the additional 1604 lines could have only been written by Marlowe.

Julius Caesar

Marlowe's handiwork is found in the very first scene of the play, where a group of commoners have gathered to see Caesar as he returns to Rome. Among them is a cobbler. And when the Roman Tribunes, Marius and Flavius, try to disperse the crowd, one of them asks: "You, sir, what trade are you?"

Cobbler. Truly, sir, in respect of a fine workman,
I am but, as you would say, a cobbler.
Marius. But what trade art thou? Answer me directly.
Cobbler. A trade, sir, that, I hope, I may use with a safe conscience;
Which is, indeed, a mender of bad soles.
Marius. What trade, thou knave? Thou naughty knave, what trade?
Cobbler. Nay, I beseech you, sir, be not out with me:
Yet, if you be out, sir, I can mend you.
Marius. What mean'st thou by that? Mend me, thou saucy fellow?
Cobbler. Why, sir, cobble you.
Flavius. Thou art a cobbler, art thou?
Cobbler. Truly, sir, all that I live by is with the awl:
I meddle with no tradesman's matters, nor women's matters, but with awl.
I am, indeed, sir, a surgeon to old shoes; when they are in great danger,
I recover them. As proper men as ever trod upon neat's leather have gone upon my handiwork.
Flavius. But wherefore art not in thy shop to-day?
Why dost thou lead these men about the streets?
Cobbler. Truly, sir, to wear out their shoes, to get myself into more work.
But, indeed, sir, we make holiday to see Caesar and to rejoice in his triumph.
[1.1. 10–36]

Marlowe's father, as we know, was a cobbler, and this was his son's way of honoring this common but intelligent man who had his own philosophy of life drawn from his craft as a "mender of soles." As a child, Marlowe must have watched his father "perform surgery" on shoes that badly needed repair.

If there is any humor in this play it is in this opening scene where the cobbler talks about his craft. Otherwise, the play advances from conspiracy to assassination to revenge. Many of its famous phrases and lines, read by thousands of high-schoolers, have become part of everyday speech:

The Ides of March.

Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look.

The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars
But in ourselves, that we are underlings.

It was Greek to me.

Et Tu, Brute!

Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears,
I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.
The evil that men do lives after them,
The good is oft interned with their bones;
So let it be with Caesar.

There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which taken at the flood, leads on to fortune.

This was the most unkindest cut of all.

The source of the play is Plutarch's *Lives*. As for its publishing history, the earliest extant version of *Julius Caesar* is the one found in the First Folio. In other words, there was no Quarto with the author's name on it. As for when it was written, we know that it was staged in 1599, since a German traveler witnessed a performance of the play on September lst of that year.

The question is: how did Edward Blount get hold of the original manuscript? Who had it all of those years. Was the version in the First Folio that same version staged in 1599? Was the character of the cobbler in the version of 1599 or added in 1623? Hopefully, we shall be able to answer these questions some day.

As for the quality of the play, Lawrence Mason, editor of the Yale edition, writes:

> To this famous and splendid monument of Elizabethan prose [Thomas North's translation of Plutarch] Shakespeare owes the whole action or plot of the play, separate incidents, many personal details of characterization, some few errors in fact, and occasional verbal suggestions: but his supreme skill in selecting, rejecting, combining, and arranging historical material has rarely been shown to better advantage than in his handling of the three 'Lives' on which he drew — those, namely, of Caesar, Brutus, and Antony.

Much Ado About Nothing

This is one of the playwright's romantic comedies, a light entertainment, set in Italy, in which he nevertheless manages to create two memorable characters, Beatrice and Benedick, as he deals with the vicissitudes of love. There is also the love interest between Leonato's daughter Hero and Claudio, Benedick's comrade in arms — a case of love at first sight. But Don Pedro, the villain of the play, tells Claudio that Hero has been unfaithful to him, and so, Claudio denounces her at their wedding ceremony and storms out. Hero is devastated. She protests her innocence, faints and is believed dead. The Friar, convinced that a terrible error has been made, speaks to Leonato:

Your daughter here the princes left for dead;
Let her awhile be secretly kept in,
And publish it that she is dead indeed;
Maintain a mourning ostentation;
And on your family's old monument
Hang mournful epitaphs and do all rites
That appertain unto a burial.
[4.1. 204–210]

Leonato asks, "What will this do?"

Friar. Marry, this well carried shall on her behalf
Change slander to remorse....
Come lady, die to live: this wedding day
Perhaps is but prolong'd: have patience and endure.
[212–213, 255–256]

The Friar persuades Hero to "die to live." Was not this the rationale also used at Deptford? Marlowe made good use of a faked death and resurrection plot in several other plays: *Romeo and Juliet, The Winter's Tale, All's Well that Ends Well,* and *Pericles.*

Marlowe's fingerprints are all over the play. A. L. Rowse writes in *The Annotated Shakespeare* (p. 390):

> It is arresting that Shakespeare should have chosen the name Hero for his heroine.... [P]lenty of other names were available, but *Hero and Leander* (whose name also occurs) was ready to hand.

Besides inserting the names Hero and Leander in the play, (Act 5, Scene 2: "Leander the good swimmer."), the faked death also reminds us of Marlowe's predicament. Claudio's epitaph is more in keeping with Marlowe's fate than Hero's:

Done to death by slanderous tongues
Was the Hero that here lies.
Death, in guerdon of her wrongs,
Gives her fame which never dies.
So the life that died with shame
Lives in death with glorious fame.
[5.3. 3–8]

Also, the remarkable dialogues and conversations between Beatrice and Benedick are hallmarks of Marlowe's ability to create humor as well as tension between sympathetic characters. Marlowe's uncanny ability to enter the minds of women is well demonstrated in this play.

Another Marlowe fingerprint is a line from Thomas Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy:* "In time the savage bull doth bear the yoke," which Don Pedro says to Benedick in Act 1, Scene 1. Marlowe had shared rooms with Kyd, which led to the latter's arrest and torture by Whitgift's inquisition. Kyd died a year later. This may have been Marlowe's way of paying tribute to his dead friend.

When Benedick is asked to write a sonnet, he complains about the difficulty of finding the right rimes, which Marlowe must have struggled with:

> I can find out no rime to "lady" but "baby," an innocent rime; for "scorn," "horn," a hard rime; for "school," "fool," a babbling rime; very ominous endings; no, I was not born under a riming planet....

As for the sources of the play, Yale editor Tucker Brooke writes (p. 124):

> No source other than the poet's own invention has been discovered for those parts of the play which give it its particular charm and interest — the story of Benedick

> and Beatrice and the delectable folly of Dogberry.... The author turned to books for his material only in the case of Hero and Claudio.

It is believed that the author took that story from a tale in the writings of Italian story-teller Matteo Bandello (1480–1561), published in Lucca in 1554. In that story Hero is called Fenicia Lionata. According to Brooke, "No English translation of Bandello's tale is known to have existed in Shakespeare's lifetime, but a free French version by Francois de Belle-Forest was published in 1582."

The characters of Dogberry, Verges, the Sexton and their roles in the plot were original with the author, who, having lived among commoners and experienced run-ins with the law, understood their obtuse mentality. It is also possible that Marlowe had access to a letter that Lord Burghley wrote to Sir Francis Walsingham describing the ignorance and stupidity of constables and watchmen. The Yale edition reprinted the letter in its entirety. As for publication history, Brooke tells us (p. 128):

> On August 23, 1600, this play was licensed for publication along with the second part of *Henry IV*, and it appeared in the same year in the only early quarto edition. This version was evidentally followed by the [version] in the 1623 Folio, and the two texts exhibit only trivial differences.

As You Like It

This is another of the playwright's exquisite entertainments, full of wit and wisdom, with some of his best lines, plus a female character, Rosiland, who is considered one of the best loved and admired in all of the author's work. The play is full of mistaken identities, confusing love affairs, cross-dressing, exile and banishment, philosophy about life, themes reflecting Marlowe's own predicament.

It begins with a strong conflict stated in the opening lines by Orlando, youngest son of the late Sir Rowland de Boys, who complains of having been mistreated by his older brother, Oliver. Orlando complains to Adam, the loyal family servant:

> My brother Jacques he keeps at school, and report speaks goldenly of his profit. For my part, he keeps me rustically at home, or — to speak more properly — stays me here at home unkept, for call you that keeping of a gentleman of my birth that differs not from the stalling of an ox? His horses are bred better.... This is it, Adam, that grieves me and the spirit of my father, which I think is within me, begins to mutiny against this servitude. I will no longer endure it, though yet I know no wise remedy how to avoid it.

Orlando then confronts his brother and demands that he be given what was allotted to him by his father so that he can go out on his own and seek his fortune. Oliver agrees, but then tries to deprive his younger brother of the money due him. He calls in Charles, the wrestler, and asks what is the news at court.

The wrestler reports that the old Duke has been banished by his younger brother, the new Duke, and that several lords have gone into exile with the old Duke. The Duke's daughter, Rosiland, has stayed behind to be with Celia, the new Duke's daughter. They were brought up together and are inseparable. Meanwhile, the old Duke and his followers have settled in the Forest of Arden where they lead a bucolic existence.

Charles, the wrestler, then tells Oliver that Orlando has challenged him in the next day's wrestling match. Oliver tells Charles that his brother is "a secret and villainous contriver against me.... Therefore use thy discretion."

Rosiland and Celia attend the wrestling match. They engage in conversation with Orlando, who is smitten by "heavenly Rosiland." He wins the match, thus thwarting his brother's plan to disinherit him.

Meanwhile, the Duke informs Celia that Rosiland must leave. The two women decide to seek Rosiland's father in the Forest of Arden. In order to protect themselves, Rosiland decides to dress as a man and Celia will wear "mean attire" and smirch her face with a kind of umber. On departing, Celia says, "Now we go in content to liberty, and not to banishment."

Scene Two takes us to the Forest of Arden where the Senior Duke and several other Lords are enjoying their life.

> *Duke Senior.* Now, my co-mates and brothers in exile,
> Hath not old custom made this life more sweet
> Than that of painted pomp? Are not these woods
> More free from peril than the envious court? ...
> And this our life, exempt from public haunt,
> Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
> Sermons in stones, and good in everything....
> Come, shall we go and kill us venison?

But one among them, Jacques (not the brother earlier named), is against hunting and killing these animals in their native dwelling place. Apparently, even back in the sixteenth century there were those who opposed the hunt on humanitarian principles. Was Jacques Marlowe's philosophical mouthpiece? When the Duke remarks to Jacques that "This wide and universal theater Presents more woeful pageants than the scene wherein we play in," Jacques replies:

> All the world's a stage,
> And all the men and women merely players.
> They have their exits and their entrances,
> And one man in his time plays many parts,
> His acts being seven ages. At first the infant,
> Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms,
> Then the whining schoolboy with his satchel
> And shining morning face, creeping like a snail
> Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,
> Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad
> Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier,
> Full of strange oaths and bearded like the pard,

Jealous in honor, sudden and quick in quarrel,
Seeking the bubble Reputation
E'en in the cannon's mouth. And then the justice,
In fair round belly with good capon lin'd,
With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,
Full of wise saws and modern instances;
And so he plays his part. The sixt age shifts
Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloon,
With spectacles on nose and pouch on side;
His youthful hose well sav'd, a world too wide
For his shrunk shank, and his big manly voice,
Turning again toward childish treble, pipes
And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,
That ends this strange eventful history,
Is second childishness and mere oblivion—
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.

It is hard to imagine that such a brilliant and poetic philosophical summing up of life could have been written by the actor-businessman Shakespeare.

We also find in Act 3, Scene 3, several Marlowe clues. A new character is introduced. Her name is Audrey, the same name as Sir Thomas Walsingham's wife. Touchstone tells her: "I am here with thee and thy goats as the most capricious poet, honest Ovid, was among the Goths." Ovid, as we know, was Marlowe's beloved poet. He goes on to say: "When a man's verses cannot be understood, nor a man's good wit seconded with the forward child, it strikes a man more dead than a great reckoning in a little room."

Obviously, Marlowe had read the coroner's report on his "death" at Deptford. S. C. Burchell, editor of the Yale edition of the play, writes in his notes (p. 112):

> Many editors have seen in this line a reference to Marlowe's death on May 30, 1593, in a quarrel over a tavern bill, finding in addition an echo of his line in the *Jew of Malta*: "infinite riches in a little room."

Since editors assume that Shakespeare wrote the play, they must also assume that he had access to the coroner's report, which gave the details of what took place in that little room in Deptford. But that is highly unlikely since Marlowe's "death" was the subject of rumor, misinformation, disinformation, and outright falsehoods. Marlowe, through Lord Burghley or his son, no doubt read the coroner's report, which was not made public.

Another Marlowe fingerprint. When Touchstone tells Audrey that he will marry her, he says, "To that end I have been with Sir Oliver Martext, the vicar of the next village, who hath promis'd to meet me in this place of the forest and to couple us." Is not the name Martext shorthand for Marlowe's text?

When Silvius and Phebe are having a lovers quarrel, Rosiland steps in between them. She chides Phebe for being cruel to Silvius (Act 3, Scene 5):

Must you be therefore proud and pitiless?
Why, what means this? Why do you look on me?

I see no more in you than in the ordinary
Of Nature's sale-work. 'Ods my little life,
I think she means to tangle my eyes too.
No, faith, proud mistress, hope not after it;
'Tis not your inky brows, your black silk hair,
Your bugle eyeballs, nor your cheek of cream
That can entame my spirits to your worship.
You foolish shepherd, wherefore do you follow her
Like foggy south, puffing with wind and rain?
You are a thousand times a properer man
Than she a woman. 'Tis such fools as you
That makes the world full of ill-favor'd children.
'Tis not her glass but you that flatters her,
And out of you she sees herself more proper
Than any of her lineaments can show her.

Was Marlowe really talking about William Pembroke and Mary Fitton, the Dark Lady of the Sonnets? Pembroke's liaison with the Dark Lady led to a pregnancy that ended in a stillborn. Rosiland also makes an eloquent reference to Leander, when she tells Orlando (Act 4, Scene 1):

> Leander, he would have liv'd many a fair year though Hero had turn'd nun, if it had not been for a hot midsummer night; for, good youth, he went but forth to wash him in the Hellespont, and being taken with the cramp, was drown'd.

As we have noted, Marlowe often uses a character in his plays as his own philosophical mouthpiece. In this play it is the character Jacques who gives a short dissertation on melancholy in Act 4, Scene 1.

As You Like It was not printed in any Quarto before its publication in the First Folio. In other words, if the play had not been given to or found by Ed Blount, it would have been lost to posterity. With so many Marlowe clues in the play, it is quite possible that Blount got the text from Marlowe himself. But what is known is that the play was entered on the Stationers' Register as a book to be stayed on August 4 of an unspecified year.

Most scholars have recognized the overt references to Marlowe in the play. But since they believe that it was written by Shakespeare, they see no unusual significance in this. However, to this writer, these references leave no doubt that Marlowe was the author, since a play of this complexity, with its many characters, could have only been written by him. The fact that Ed Blount included it in the First Folio indicates that it was Marlowe's.

The Merry Wives of Windsor

This is a comical farce in which Falstaff, the old reprobate, is the central figure, with some characters from previous plays— Mistress Quickly, Justice Shallow, Bardolph, Nym and Pistol — taking part. Falstaff becomes the butt of a series of humiliating jokes as he tries to persuade two loyal and respectable Windsor

wives to commit adultery with him. Much of the play's humor relies on puns and the misuses of language.

One of the most amusing scenes is in Act 4, Scene 1, where Mrs. Page, accompanied by Mistress Quickly, is taking her son William to school. They meet Sir Hugh Evans, a Welsh parson, who questions the boy on the nitty-gritty of grammar. The result is one of the most hilarious dialogues in Elizabethan literature. There can be no doubt that Marlowe, with his experiences as a schoolboy, wrote it.

As expected, the play also has its Marlowe clues. In Act 1, Scene 1, Pistol says, "How now, Mephistophilus!" Editor George Van Santvoord writes in his notes for the Yale edition (p. 110): "*Mephistophilus.* The evil spirit attendant upon the hero in Marlowe's tragedy, *Doctor Faustus.*" And in Act 4, Scene 5, Bardolph talks of the cozeners "like three German devils, three Doctor Faustuses." Concerning lines 17–26 in Act 3, Scene 1, the Yale editor writes (p. 115): "Stanzas from a popular song by Christopher Marlowe. In line 24 Sir Hugh substitutes for one of Marlowe's lines a line from a metrical version of Psalm 137."

We know that the Countess of Pembroke was writing a metrical version of the Book of Psalms. Did that line come from her work?

In Act 1, Scene 3, Falstaff refers to one of the wives he hopes to seduce as "a region in Guiana, all gold and bounty." Santvoord writes in his notes (p. 112) "*Guiana.* In 1596 Sir Walter Raleigh returned from an expedition to South America and published a book entitled 'The Discoverie of the Large, Rich, and Bewtiful Empyre of Guiana, with a relation of the great and golden Citie of Manoa, which the Spaniards call El Dorado.'"

We know that Marlowe was part of that Raleigh circle and no doubt remained interested in Raleigh's adventures.

The Merry Wives of Windsor was largely of the playwright's own invention. It is the only one of his plays which deals exclusively with English country society. It was entered in the Stationers' Register on January 18, 1602 and performed a number of times before the Queen who, delighted with Falstaff, is said to have requested the author to write a play about Falstaff in love. We wonder who it was who conveyed Elizabeth's wishes to Marlowe.

Hamlet

Hamlet is no doubt the most famous play ever written. It has no equal anywhere because of its literary excellence, its unforgettable characters, and its intense human conflicts. It could have only been written by a superlative poetic genius. Every emotion in the play points to Marlowe, whose obvious sufferings gave Hamlet's lines the power they have. We shall find many Marlowe clues in this masterpiece.

In Act 1, Scene 2, the King tries to persuade Hamlet not to return to the university at Wittenberg. That, of course, is the same university Doctor Faustus attended. Hamlet then thinks of suicide in an eloquent soliloquy:

> O that this too too sullied flesh would melt,
> Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew.
> Or that the Everlasting had not fixed
> His canon 'gainst self-slaughter. O God, God,
> How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
> Seem to me all the uses of this world!

We wonder how often Marlowe himself thought of suicide, living in his perpetual exile.

We discover another interesting Marlowe clue when the ghost describes to Hamlet how his uncle murdered him by pouring the "juice of cursed hebona" in his ear while he napped. That is the very same poison Barabas used in *The Jew of Malta* to kill his own daughter.

In Act 2, Scene 1, we find Polonius conferring with his man Reynaldo whom he is sending to Paris to spy on his son Laertes. Did Marlowe model Polonius on Lord Burghley, his boss in the Secret Service? Polonius's instructions to Reynaldo may be one of the techniques that Marlowe was taught by his mentor on how to elicit information about a particular person in this indirect manner.

We have already related how Marlowe inserted a huge chunk from Dido in Act 2, Scene 2, of the play. He also has Hamlet echo a passage spoken by Tamburlaine in Act 2, Scene 5 in *Tamburlaine I* :

> Nature, that fram'd us of four elements,
> Doth teach us all to have aspiring minds;
> Our souls, whose faculties can comprehend
> The wondrous architecture of the world,
> And measure every wandering planet's course,
> Still climbing after knowledge infinite
> And always moving as the restless spheres ...

Hamlet says in Act 2, Scene 2, in conversation with Rosenkranz and Guildenstern:

> What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculty! In form and moving how express and admirable! In action like an angel! In apprehension how like a god!

As for the origin of the play, William Farnam writes in the Pelican edition (p. 20):

> A not very revelatory passage in Thomas Nashe's epistle to Robert Greene's *Menaphon* contains a reference to "whole Hamlets, I should say handfuls, of tragicall speeches" as being lifted from Seneca, which indicates that a *Hamlet* was on the stage by 1589, the date of *Menaphon*, and that it was a Senecan tragedy. Some even more tantalizing words of Nashe's in the same passage have led many to believe that Thomas Kyd, the author of the *Spanish Tragedy*, wrote this old *Hamlet*. A performance of it is recorded for 1594 and a glimpse of a part of its action comes in 1596 in Thomas Lodge's *Wits Miserie* with a description of a countenance "pale as the Visard of ye ghost which cried so miserally at ye Theator like an oister wife, *Hamlet revenge.*"

Note that Marlowe knew both Thomas Nashe and Thomas Kyd. Thomas Lodge (1558–1625) was Marlowe's contemporary. His novel, *Rosalynde* (1590), was a source for the plot of *As You Like It.*

The version of the play we presently have is believed to have been written in 1601, based on Francois de Belleforest's *The History of Hamblet.* The latter's source of the story is the twelfth century *Historio Danica* of Saxo Grammaticus. A bad quarto was published in 1603, which was followed by the publication of an authentic copy of the play in 1604–05. The 1623 Folio version is believed to have come from the theater company's prompt book, but there is no absolute verification of this.

As we have already noted, *Hamlet* is full of Marlowe's clues: the extensive reference to *Dido, Queen of Carthage;* the relationship between Marlowe as Hamlet and Lord Burghley as Polonius; Polonius's lessons on spying; Hamlet's intensive interest in the theater, giving speech lessons to the players; the reference to university performances of plays; Polonius's advice to Laertes, very much like Burghley's advice to his own son; the reference to Wittenberg; the soliloquys that reflect Marlowe's state of mind as he lives in perpetual exile and no doubt contemplated suicide. Also, as in his other plays, Marlowe maintains a very high level of emotional tension and physical conflict.

Undoubtedly, the most famous soliloquy in all of world literature is Hamlet's extended thoughts on suicide in Act 3, Scene 1:

> To be or not to be—that is the question:
> Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
> The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune
> Or to take arms against a sea of troubles
> And by opposing end them. To die, to sleep—
> No more—and by sleep to say we end
> The heartache, and the thousand natural shocks
> That flesh is heir to. 'Tis a consummation
> Devoutly to be wished. To die, to sleep—
> To sleep—perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub,
> For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
> When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
> Must give us pause. There's the respect
> That makes calamity of so long life.
> For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
> Th' oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely
> The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,
> The insolence of office, and the spurns
> That patient merit of th' unworthy takes,
> When he himself might his quietus make
> With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear,
> To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
> But that the dread of something after death,
> The undiscovered country, from whose bourn
> No traveller returns, puzzles the will,

And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pitch and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry
And lose the name of action.

Obviously, it is easier to relate the circumstances of Marlowe's life to Hamlet's internal agonies than to the life of Shakespeare. When Hamlet speaks of "outrageous fortune," we are easily reminded of Sonnet 29 in which the poet writes:

When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes
I all alone beweep my outcast state
And trouble deaf Heaven with my bootless cries
And look upon myself and curse my fate....

Surely, those are not the words of a prosperous businessman, part-owner of a theatre, and an actor. They are the words of a tortured outcast, living in disgrace, with a ruined reputation. Interestingly, Hamlet did not experience "outrageous fortune." He was a prince, an heir to the throne, a student at Wittenberg. His murdered father's ghost urges him to kill his uncle, which he is reluctant to do. So, why these thoughts of suicide? Because Marlowe put himself into Hamlet, and transferred his own agony to his character. Thus, the melancholy, neurotic Dane becomes the means of speaking to the world from the poet's outcast state.

And that is why this famous soliloquy can be read out of context by any high-school student, since what it says is universal in its meaning, notwithstanding who the author was.

Whether one agrees with this notion or not, Marlowe's life not only greatly illuminates *Hamlet*, but all of the other plays in the First Folio as well.

Twelfth Night or *What You Will*

This romantic comedy has several characteristics that remind us of Marlowe. First, it reflects his obsession with love and the idea of love at first sight, then it makes clever and amusing use of the confusion caused by mistaken identities, a girl pretending to be a boy, as with Rosiland in *As You Like It*, and finally the playwright manages to intersperse, between scenes where love is the subject, clownish hilarity generated by comic characters.

Twelfth Night has some of the loveliest and delightful poetry and songs to be found in any Elizabethan play. It takes place in Illyria, an ancient country in Southern Europe on the Adriatic Sea. Its ruler is the romantic Duke of Orsino who has fallen in love with Olivia, a wealthy lady, who is mourning her dead brother and refuses to see the Duke or entertain his proclamations of love.

The idea of a beautiful woman mourning the death of a brother reminds us of the Countess of Pembroke's mourning the death of her heroic brother Sir Philip Sidney who died from a wound suffered on the battlefield. Mary Sidney and her brother both wrote poetry and shared an intense literary life, and his death formed a great shadow over her life.

Olivia's uncle Sir Toby Belch and his friend Sir Andrew Aguecheek are constantly drunk and she instructs her steward, Malvolio, to put a stop to it. He is the perfect butler, and much of the secondary plot of the play is how Belch, Aguecheek and Olivia's maid Maria manage to make Malvolio miserable. One of the reasons why they so dislike him is that he is a Puritan. Maria says:

> The devil a puritan that he is, or anything constantly but a time-pleaser; an affectioned ass that cons state without book and utters it by great swaths; the best persuaded of himself, so crammed, as he thinks, with excellencies, that it is his grounds of faith that all that look on him love him. And on that vice in him will my revenge find notable cause to work [2.3. 159–166].

Later, in Act 3, Scene 2, Andrew says: "I had as lief be a Brownist as a politician" [33–34].

Maria's accusing Malvolio of being a Puritan who can recite Scripture by heart, and Andrew's reference to Robert Browne's religious beliefs assumes that the audience knew what Puritans and Brownists believed. There were no Puritans or Brownists in Illyria. All of this relates directly to Marlowe. David Riggs, in his biography, *The World of Christopher Marlowe*, writes (p. 93):

> The students and Fellows of Corpus Christi are conspicuously absent from all the petitions and lists of Puritan activists at Elizabethan Cambridge.... On the other hand, key leaders of the radical Puritans who advocated *total* separation from the English Church did attend Corpus Christi. Robert Browne, the charismatic founder of the Separatists, took his BA from Corpus in 1572, returned to Cambridge six years later, and soon attracted a congregation in the church of St Benet, hard by his old college. Browne had come "to be a witness of that woeful state of Cambridge." He persuaded Robert Harrison, another Corpus man (BA 1567, MA 1572), not to take Holy Orders in the English Church, and the two graduates founded an independent Church at Norwich. When the local bishop complained to Burghley in 1581, the entire congregation migrated to Middleburg, in Holland. Another of Browne's followers, John Greenwood, still resided at Corpus during Marlowe's first six months there. A notation in the Buttery Book indicates that Marlowe bought him dinner during one week in the spring of that year. Greenwood fell under arrest in 1586. His collaborator and co-religionist Henry Barrow took his BA at Clare College, but may have been admitted to Corpus Christi in 1576 to study for his MA.

To what extent was Marlowe influenced by these Puritans who were critical of the English Church? Marlowe had entered Corpus Christi in December 1580 and remained there for the next six years. Did the views of the Puritans influence Marlowe's decision not to take Holy Orders? And why did Marlowe include these references in the play? Was this another way of letting the audience know who was the real author of the play? The only people among his

audiences who would have recognized these references were university men and the young lawyers at the inns.

The play's amusing charm is based on the author's clever use of mistaken identities. Obviously Marlowe himself was living with an identity other than the one he was born with. When Viola tells Olivia on meeting her: "What I am and what I would are as secret as maidenhead," we can easily recognize Marlowe's own predicament.

We find another Marlowe clue in Act 4, Scene 2, in which the Fool remarks: "I say there is no darkness but ignorance" (46–47). Machiavel says in the prologue to *The Jew of Malta*, "I count religion but a childish toy, And hold there is no sin but ignorance."

Twelfth Night was first published in the First Folio of 1623. It had not been printed before in any Quarto. Had it not appeared in the First Folio, we might never have had its text. It is believed that it was written in 1601 and was performed at the Middle Temple on February 2, 1602. While the love story was taken from a number of published sources, the subplot involving Malvolio seems to have been created by the author. The editors of the Folger Library's edition comment:

> The particular gossip that Malvolio's portrayal may have touched concerned Sir William Knollys, Comptroller of the Royal Household, a pompous and unpopular Official, whose quarters adjoined those of some of the Queen's maids of honor.... More than this, though he was married and affected great probity, he secretly pursued Mary Fitton, one of the maids of honor, who led him on for sport, though she was carrying on a serious love affair with the Earl of Pembroke. The character of Malvolio is so like that of Sir William that it is hard to resist the belief that some courtier supplied Shakespeare with the material for a caricature that would have rocked with laughter everyone except Sir William.

Since we believe that Marlowe wrote the play, we can assume that he was well acquainted with the likes of Sir William Knollys. But whether or not the theory of the Folger editors is true will have to be determined by the detective work of future scholars.

Troilus and Cressida

Troilus and Cressida is a play written by a bitter, cynical, and disillusioned Marlowe whose imposed exile must have made his life at times miserable if not unbearable. We can imagine that, like Hamlet, he too thought of suicide, but in the end decided that life, even as it was, was preferable to death.

It is doubtful that *Troilus and Cressida* was ever performed until recent times. There is no evidence of a performance during the lifetimes of Shakespeare or Marlowe. But it is hardly a play that the actor-businessman could or would have written. The subject matter required the knowledge and genius of a Marlowe.

The setting — the Trojan war — was quite familiar to Marlowe. In *Dido*, we

find Aeneas, a Trojan prince who survived the holocaust at Troy and escaped by boat, landing at Carthage in a storm. Helen, about whom the war was fought, we find in *Doctor Faustus*. And in *Hamlet* we find a reiteration of what Aeneas had told Dido about the horrible bloodletting in Troy.

However, the events in *Troilus and Cressida* take place before the final debacle, during the Greek siege of Troy. After seven years of siege, the Greeks have not been able to destroy Troy, which is so well protected by its walls and towers. Only by the gift of the famous Trojan Horse were the Greeks able to penetrate the city and destroy it.

Why Marlowe returned to this familiar ground is probably because it provided him with characters who demonstrated the tragedy of love when it is mixed with the folly of war. Troilus falls madly in love with Cressida who later betrays him when she is exchanged to the Greeks for a Trojan prisoner. Priam's sons argue whether Helen is worth the war that will ultimately destroy them. And while Helen is a great beauty, she comes across as an ancient bimbo, not unlike Paris Hilton, whose idea of enjoyment is counting the hairs on Troilus's youthful chin.

Harold Bloom writes of this play (p. 328):

> The matter of Troy is reduced to "a whore and a cuckold," Helen and Menelaus, and to a company of rogues, fools, bawds, gulls and politicians masquerading as sages—that is to say, to the public figures of Shakespeare's day, and of ours. Yet the play's bitterness surpasses the limits of satire, and leaves us with a more nihilistic impression than "heroic farce" or "travesty" would indicate.

It is the opinion of this writer that *Troilus and Cressida* is one of the greatest plays ever written. It is a devastating commentary on the Trojan War, which could have been avoided had Priam demanded that Paris give Helen back to Menelaus. She was little more than a trophy, and the couple lived a life of pleasure, love, and sex. But Priam, so indulgent of his sons, lacked the wisdom or will to see the utter superficiality of their relationship and that its cost was far above its worth to Troy.

As one would expect, scholars have been puzzled by this play because they believe that William Shakespeare, the actor-businessman, wrote it, and they cannot see any connection between the incredible emotional power of the play and the mild-mannered actor from Stratford.

But *Troilus and Cressida* could not have been written by anyone but Marlowe, who had the genius and understanding to take this story and turn it into a play of stark, common, unrelenting reality. Achilles' dragging Hector's body by the tail of his horse is a fitting end to an unvarnished, gut-wrenching account of what happened at Troy. Marlowe was able to bring this ancient story to life so that its universal power can still be felt today. *Troilus and Cressida* is about universalities of which we all experience: love, fidelity, betrayal, stupidity, war, cruelty, self-indulgence, misjudgment, and death.

Scholars believe that the play was written shortly before February 1603 when

it was first entered in the Stationers' Register. According to Henrietta Bartlett (p. 40): "The play was first printed in 1609 with two title-pages, the first stating that it had been acted at the Globe and the second omitting this statement and with a preface which says distinctly that it was never acted."

The first production of the play was actually given in 1898 before King Ludwig II of Bavaria. Its first modern production took place in London in 1912.

Measure for Measure

Measure for Measure is a play about moral hypocrisy and how it corrodes a civil society. In the opening scene, the Duke of Vienna, dismayed by the growing violation of the state's moral laws because of his leniency, decides to take a leave of absence and place full authority in the hands of his deputy, Angelo, who, because of his dispassionate and severe character, will enforce the moral laws more strictly.

Lord Angelo's first act is to close down the houses of prostitution. He is then confronted with the case of Claudio, a young man accused of getting his fiancee, Julietta, with child. Angelo orders him imprisoned. Lucio, a free-floating character who seems to know his way around the whorehouses, asks Claudio why this new moral strictness in the city. Claudio explains:

> From too much liberty, my Lucio, liberty.
> As surfeit is the father of much fast,
> So every scope by the immoderate use
> Turns to restraint. Our natures do pursue,
> Like rats that ravin down their proper bane,
> A thirsty evil, and when we drink we die.
> [1.2. 129–134]

That is pure Calvinism. Also, the last three lines are a powerful paraphrasing of Marlowe's enigmatic motto on his portrait, *Quod me nutrit, me destruit.* What nourishes me, destroys me. We find that same motto repeated in line 12 of Sonnet 73.

In order to demonstrate that the new laws have real teeth, Angelo orders Claudio to be executed "by nine tomorrow morning." Claudio's sister, Isabella, a nun, goes before Angelo and begs him to pardon Claudio. Angelo is totally captivated by the virtuous Isabella and tells her that he will pardon Claudio only if she will give herself to him. But she refuses to submit to his lust.

Meanwhile, the Duke, disguised as a friar, enters the prison where Claudio is awaiting his execution. He tells Claudio to prepare for death. However, after apprising himself of the situation, he decides to save Claudio from execution. He tells Isabella about Mariana, whom Angelo promised to marry but abandoned when Mariana lost her dowry. The plan is for Mariana to take the place of Isabella in Angelo's bed. He won't know the difference because all of this will take place in complete darkness.

The love encounter successfully takes place, but Angelo reneges on his promise to Isabella and sends the following message to the prison Provost (Act 4, Scene 2):

> Whatsoever you may hear to the contrary, let Claudio be executed by four of the clock; and, in the afternoon, Barnardine. For my better satisfaction let me have Claudio's head sent me by five. Let this be duly performed, with a thought that more depends on it than we must yet deliver [123–129].

The Duke, still disguised as a Friar, orders the Provost to delay Claudio's death. The Provost asks:

> Alack! How may I do it, having the hour limited, and an express command, under penalty, to deliver his head in the view of Angelo? ...
> *Duke.* By the vow of mine order I warrant you, if my instructions may be your guide. Let this Barnardine be this morning executed, and his head borne to Angelo.
> *Provost.* Angelo hath seen them both, and will discover the favour.
> *Duke.* O, death's a great disguiser; and you may add to it. Shave the head, and tie the beard; and say it was the desire of the penitent to be so bared before his death [175–189].

But Barnadine, in drunken rebellion, refuses to be executed. But as chance would have it, a prisoner by the name of Ragozine, a pirate, has just died of fever. He is Claudio's age and looks somewhat like him. The Duke remarks: "O, 'tis an accident that heaven provides!" (4.3. 81). The Provost cuts off Rogozine's head and brings it to Angelo.

Did Marlowe, Thomas Walsingham, Lord Burghley, and Robert Cecil consider John Penry's coincidental hanging the "accident that heaven provides"? We read that on May 29, 1593, Penry was suddenly and hurriedly pulled away from dinner to be hanged in some obscure place without witnesses, and no one knows where he is buried.

Was John Penry's body substituted for Marlowe's? Penry was a radical Puritan, executed by Whitgift's inquisition for having published the Marprelate papers. It was probably Burghley or his son who managed to make the body available to Walsingham's men after the hurried hanging prior to the planned phony murder of Christopher Marlowe. It is even likely that Walsingham's men were authorized to take possession of the body after the hanging and bring it to Deptford for the coroner's inquest.

Note that it is the Duke, with the same authority of Lord Burghley, who orders the substitution of bodies. He tells the Provost: "Let this Barnardine be this morning executed, and his head borne to Angelo." The Provost comments: "Angelo hath seen them both, and will discover the favor." But the Duke replies: "O! death's a great disguiser."

They probably didn't have to do much disguising at Deptford. Penry was only a few years older than Marlowe. All that Walsingham's men had to do was stick a knife just above Penry's right eye into his frontal lobe in accordance with the story they told of how Marlowe was killed. And so the coroner at Deptford

and his witnesses were given a body purported to be Marlowe's. It was Walsingham's men who asserted that the body was Marlowe's, and the coroner took their word for it. After the inquest, the body was buried in an unmarked grave in the local churchyard.

Thus, Marlowe escaped torture and hanging, and went on to write the thirty-six plays in the First Folio. There is a seamless continuity between the plays and poems he wrote before Deptford and those he wrote after. All one has to do is read both canons in their approximate chronological order to become convinced that they are the work of one literary genius.

It should also be noted that the play was not published in Quarto before its appearance in the First Folio. J. W. Lever writes in his edition of *Measure for Measure* (Methuan, 1965, p. xiii):

> Shakespeare's play was said to have been drastically cut for the court performance on 26 December 1604, and then expanded after 1606 by an unidentified reviser who added hundreds of lines of prose and verse couplets to the already revised text.

Who was that unidentified reviser? Marlowe himself? Shakespeare died in 1616. Lever also tells us (p. xi): "It is generally accepted that the copy for these plays, as well as for *The Winter's Tale*, was the work of Ralph Crane, a professional scrivener who was connected with the King's Men in the early 1620's." If these transcriptions were made after Shakespeare's death, who ordered them? And who wrote the original manuscripts from which Crane made his copies?

Measure for Measure is considered one of the dramatist's "problem plays." What made it a "problem" has never been fully or convincingly explained by the scholars who have pored over it. Harold Bloom comments (p. 159):

> [W]e never can be certain as to just how we ought to receive the play.... [It] involves [the] audience in what I am compelled to call the dramatist's simultaneous invocation and evasion of Christian belief and Christian morals.... I scarcely see how the play, in regard to its Christian allusiveness, can be regarded as other than blasphemous. Ultimately that includes the title and its clear reference to the Sermon on the Mount: "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again," a reverberation of "Judge not, that ye be not judged."

Professor Bloom's astute comments are illuminating. They reinforce what we know about Marlowe's knowledge of the Bible. But it is quite possible to simply accept the play as one about moral hypocrisy. In the end, the dramatist's aim was always to entertain his audience. However, it was his genius to provide more than just entertainment. He also provided philosophical discussion, exquisite poetry, amusing characters, comments on love and lust, beauty and seduction, brothers and sisters, whores and bawds. And from scene to scene everything flows in a dramatic order that gives the play suspense and meaning. For those of us who believe that Marlowe wrote it, the play contains some of the strongest and most convincing clues that he was indeed its creator.

Othello

So many perceptive editors and critics regard *Othello* as a powerful masterpiece about good and evil, that it seems unlikely that the actor-businessman from Stratford could have written it. There is nothing in Shakespeare's life that even remotely suggests that he himself had ever had to deal with anything so powerful as the emotions in this play.

Othello is a play about the ways of evil written by a man who had faced such evil in the person of those who had tried to destroy him, namely Richard Baines and others whose slanders have marred his reputation to this very day. As a student of Calvinism, Marlowe understood and obviously accepted Calvin's view of man's innate depravity, which had been drummed into his head for eight years by his teachers. This permitted him not only to understand human nature in its mixed manifestations, but also to dramatize it so powerfully in this play.

Alvin Kernan of Yale University writes in his perceptive analysis of the play (Signet *Othello*, p. xxxiv):

> When Iago's schemes are at last exposed, Othello, finding it impossible for a moment to believe that a *man* could have contrived such evil, stares at Iago's feet and then says sadly, "but that's a fable." What he hopes to find when he looks down are the cloven feet of the devil.... [H]e is forced to realize that far from living in some simplified, "fabulous" world where evil is a metaphysical power raiding human life from without, he dwells where evil is somehow inextricably woven with good into man himself.

The basic plot is well known. Desdemona, the beautiful daughter of a Venetian Senator, falls in love with Othello, a Moor, who through his bravery and intelligence has risen to the position of general of the Venetian army. Othello had often visited the Senator's home, and Desdemona, captivated by stories of his youth, loves him enough to marry him without her father's knowledge. Meanwhile, Iago, Othello's chief officer, becomes intensely jealous of Othello and is determined to destroy him. He does this by cleverly convincing Othello of his wife's infidelity. Othello, convinced that Iago is telling him the truth, rejects Desdemona's pleas of innocence, and kills her. When in the end he discovers that Iago had lied and deceived him, he kills himself.

The play itself is masterfully constructed and proceeds from one dramatic scene to the next with ever increasing tension and suspense. When Othello finally realizes that he has killed his innocent wife, he stabs himself, then looks at Desdemona, and says: "I kiss'd thee ere I kill'd thee: no way but this, Killing myself, to die upon a kiss."

So ends this magnificent tragedy which has come down to us as one of the greatest plays ever written. Did Marlowe write it? The play itself is one big Marlowe clue. First of all, the subject is far beyond anything remotely connected with Shakespeare's life. The actor-businessman could not possibly have written about evil in the intense way that only Marlowe could. The Iago in Marlowe's life was Richard Baines whose aim it was to destroy the playwright. The duel-

ing scene between Roderigo and Cassio in Act 5, Scene 1,was probably modeled on the actual dueling fracas that Marlowe experienced when his friend Watson came to his rescue and killed William Bradley.

The highly dramatic scene in which Othello murders Desdemona reminds one of the murder scene in *Edward II*, in which Marlowe created high drama and emotional intensity. Marlowe was a master of such scenes.

As for the source of the play, Thomas M. Parrott, editor of the Tudor edition, informs us that the *Othello* plot was derived from an Italian collection of tales published in 1565 and not translated into English before Shakespeare's death. There were French and Spanish editions. Parrott comments (p. ix): "[T]here is perhaps no more striking example in literature of the power of genius to transmute base metal into gold than the transformation of the Italian novel into the English play." As for its publication, Parrott writes (p. vii):

> The first edition of *Othello* was published in 1622.... It was properly entered on the Stationers' Register (October 6, 1621), decently printed, and presents a very respectable text.... The text is about 160 lines shorter than that in the Folio.

Lawrence Mason, editor of the Yale edition, writes (p. 150):

> [The First Folio] is unquestionably the better and more authoritative text. The Folio contains about 160 lines lacking in the Quarto, many of them absolutely essential, while the Quarto contains only about a dozen peculiar to itself, few of them important.

Nothing in the history of the First Folio indicates who made the revisions or additions in the final Folio texts of the various plays. As we have already asserted, only Marlowe himself could have made the revisions and additions.

A reference to Marlowe is made in the Notes of the Yale edition by Tucker Brooke (p. 168):

> V.ii.347. *Like the base Indian.* There is no significance in the first Folio spelling, "Iudean." Shakespeare is thinking of the savage who throws away a king's ransom because he cannot realize its value. In his mind, probably, were the lines near the beginning of Marlowe's *Jew of Malta:*
>
> "Give me the merchants of the Indian mines ...
> The wealthy Moor that in the eastern rocks
> Without control can pick his riches up,
> And in his house heap pearl like pebble-stones."
> [I.i. 19, 21–23]

In his last speech, Othello identifies himself as the "base Indian" richer than all his tribe, who threw away a pearl. A very significant Marlowe clue.

The diabolical character of Iago has intrigued Shakespearean scholars almost as much as the inscrutable character of Hamlet. A. L. Rowse writes in *The Annotated Shakespeare* (p. 1804):

> Iago is the most complex and interesting psychological study in the play.... In a way, Iago is a psychotic, as Hamlet was; it forms another aspect of the universality of Shakespeare's genius that he should have had such an intuitive understanding of the

> operations of psychosis.... There is no love in Iago; he hates human beings for the fools they are.... Perhaps Iago was mad — he certainly is not sane — with envy, hatred and contempt.

What personal experience could have given the actor-businessman such knowledge of psychotic evil? None that we know of. However, Marlowe's personal experience was with Richard Baines, who would fit any man's description of a psychotic. He not only tried to get Marlowe tortured and executed, but at one time tried to poison everyone at the Catholic Seminary at Rheims. He tried to get Marlowe prosecuted for counterfeiting in Holland. The man had the mind of a Iago, or Iago had the mind of a Baines.

King Lear

This is a play about the depredations of old age, ungrateful children, and sibling rivalry turned murderous. It is a very complex play, with two intertwining plots, that requires careful reading and rereading. Harold Bloom writes (p. 476):

> *King Lear*, together with *Hamlet*, ultimately baffles commentary. Of all Shakespeare's dramas, these show an apparent infinitude that perhaps transcends the limits of literature.... The experience of reading *King Lear*, in particular, is altogether uncanny.... I emphasize reading, more than ever, because I have attended many stagings of *King Lear*, and invariably have regretted being there.

It is believed that the play was written in 1605 or early 1606, when James I had already been King since April 1603. The play was entered on the Stationers' Register on November 26, 1607. These years were considered a particularly dark period in the author's life. Which infers that it fits more with Marlowe's unhappy circumstances than with those of the actor-bussinessman, who was then waxing quite prosperous.

Obviously, the so-called dark period could hardly apply to the man known as William Shakespeare who was busy buying and selling real estate and suing anybody who owed him money. Yet he never sued the publisher who printed an unauthorized Quarto of *King Lear*. Nor did he sue Thomas Thorpe for publishing an unauthorized edition of his Sonnets. It is highly unlikely that during this period he sat down and wrote a play of such Biblical darkness as *King Lear*.

The sources of the play were Holinshed and a rather bland play, *The True Chronicle History of King Leir*, published anonymously in 1605. Marlowe recrafted the play into the masterpiece we have today. As for its publication, the 1970 Pelican edition states (p. 27):

> In 1608 a version of *King Lear* appeared in a quarto volume.... Its text was reproduced in 1619 in a quarto falsely dated 1608.... In 1623 a greatly improved though "cut" version of the play appeared in the first folio, evidently printed from the quarto after it had been carefully collated with the official playhouse manuscript.

If the official playhouse manuscript was available, why would it have been even necessary to correct the Quarto? John Berryman, in his book, *Berryman's Shakespeare* (p. 183), writes that the First Folio version of the play "was printed from a copy of the quarto which had been heavily corrected in order to bring it more or less into accord with the prompt book.":

> At some time between 1608 and 1623 a copy of it was extensively corrected by a playhouse scribe to bring it into agreement with the prompt book at the Globe, and was then used by Jaggard as copy for the folio. (p. 193)

Again, if the prompt book at the Globe was the correct version of the play, why was it necessary to extensively correct the Quarto since the prompt copy would have given Jaggard the copy he needed to set the play for the First Folio? However, if Marlowe had made the corrections, he would not have needed the prompt copy. As the author of the play, he would have known how to correct the Quarto, add the needed lines and eliminate other lines to tighten the play. Incidentally, neither the corrected Quarto nor the prompt copy have survived.

It is assumed that the only reason why anyone would have corrected the Quarto was because correct copy was needed for the First Folio, and it is unlikely that a "playhouse scribe" could have made the kind of extensive changes that were made by someone, most likely Marlowe, who made changes in many of the other plays as well in preparation for the Folio. We know of no scribes or editors who could have made all of the changes that were made in so many of the plays in the Folio. And we can also assume that it was Ed Blount who gave Marlowe the opportunity to make the changes the author wanted.

Like so many of Marlowe's previous plays, this one also begins with intense conflict: between Lear and his daughter Cordelia, Lear and Kent, Cordelia and her sisters, the bastard Edmund and his brother Edgar. Thus the stage is set for murder and tragedy reminiscent of Biblical stories. We know that Marlowe knew the Bible inside out, chapter and verse.

Thomas Carter, in his 1905 book *Shakespeare and Holy Scripture*, writes (pp. 3–4):

> No writer has assimilated the thoughts and reproduced the words of Holy Scripture more copiously than Shakespeare.... The spontaneous flow of Scriptural ideas and phrases which are to be found everywhere in the plays reveals the fact most clearly that the mind of Shakespeare must indeed have been "saturated" with the Word of God. He most readily expresses his mind in Biblical phrase or illustration.... He may be said to use Scripture on any and every occasion, to dignify the thought of a king, to point the jest of a wit, or to brighten the dullness of a clown.

Shakespeare's will indicated that he didn't even own a Bible! Carter continues:

> But it is of importance to notice how much Shakespeare is indebted to the English Bible for his vocabulary. I have studied every line in the plays in order to trace out how far this indebtedness extends, and after a careful comparison have come to the conclusion that the Genevan Bible was the version used by Shakespeare.

Marlowe's education and training at the King's School and Corpus Christi at Cambridge provided him with as intense a Biblical education as could have been had in Elizabethan England.

What shall we make of *King Lear*, this immensely moving and passionate play? So much cruelty, so much suffering, so much pain. What could have driven the author to write such a play? There is no doubt that Marlowe put much of his own suffering in this play. Like Edgar, he had lost his identity, was forced to live in disguise since May, 1593, and was unable to assert his true identity publicly.

Was he ever able to see his parents since his supposed death? What was their reaction to the news of their brilliant son's demise? Did they believe the slander heaped on his reputation? Did Marlowe ever disguise himself as a madman in order to see his father John Marlowe before he died in February 1605? A Bible was listed among the cobbler's goods. Marlowe's mother Katherine died barely a month after her husband's death. Was Marlowe ever able to visit their graves?

We know that Marlowe began writing *King Lear* after the death of his parents. Burdened with grief, was he in a state of mind to pour his own suffering into this extraordinary play? The vivid images of Dover must have brought back happy moments of childhood with his family. He had the same filial love and devotion for his father that Edgar had for Gloucester, that Kent had for the King, that Cordelia had for Lear.

Concerning Dover, we read in Act 4, Scene 1:

> *Gloucester.* Come hither, fellow.
> *Edgar.* [Aside] And yet I must.—Bless thy sweet eyes, they bleed.
> *Gloucester.* Know'st thou the way to Dover?
> *Edgar.* Both stile and gate, horse-way and footpath....
> *Gloucester.* ... Dost thou know Dover?
> *Edgar.* Ay, master.
> *Gloucester.* There is a cliff whose high and bending head
> Looks fearfully in the confined deep:
> Bring me but to the very brim of it,
> And I'll repair the misery thou dost bear
> With something rich about me: from that place
> I shall no leading need.
> [4.1. 55–58, 74–81]

In Scene 6, they reach a field near the Dover cliff.

> *Gloucester.* When shall I come to th' top of that same hill?
> *Edgar.* You do climb it now. Look, how we labor.
> *Gloucester.* Methinks the ground is even.
> *Edgar.* Horrible steep. Hark, do you hear the sea?
> *Gloucester.* No, truly.
> *Edgar.* Why then your other senses grow imperfect
> By your eyes' anguish.
> *Gloucester.* So may it be indeed....

Edgar. Come on, sir; here's the place: stand still. How fearful
And dizzy 'tis to cast one's eyes so low!
The crows and choughs that wing in the midway air
Show scarce so gross as beetles. Half way down
Hangs one that gathers sampire, dreadful trade!
Methinks he seems no bigger than his head.
The fishermen that walk upon the beach
Appear like mice; and yond tall anchoring bark
Diminished to her cock; her cock, a buoy
Almost too small for sight. The murmuring surge
That on th' unnumb'red idle pebble chafes
Cannot be heard so high. I'll look no more,
Lest my brain turn and the deficient sight
Topple down headlong.
[4.6. 1–6, 11–24]

Obviously, Marlowe is relating in poetic detail the sights he saw so vividly atop the Dover cliff when he and his mother would walk or ride from Canterbury to Dover to visit his grandparents and other relatives. He even mentions the men who gathered sampire, an aromatic herb, from the side of the cliff at great risk to life and limb. Only someone intimately acquainted with the Dover cliff would have known that.

It is quite easy to believe that Marlowe identified with Edgar, the hunted son who had to live in abject disguise in order to stay alive. He is the one with the vivid memories of Dover. Obviously, Marlowe suffered greatly as he lived in social exile, and he must have wondered why God would let this happen to him, the same God that had endowed him with such powerful literary gifts.

Did Marlowe write *King Lear* under a cloud of despair, having suffered over twelve years of namelessness, yet producing one literary masterpiece after another, masterpieces that would move audiences for generations to come? We know that they will be read and performed as long as Western civilization exists. Yet, they were written by a genius who could not even proclaim his authorship. He had to use his own code, embedded in each play, to put a mark in its text. If he was no longer Marlowe, who was he? Lear asks: "Who is it who can tell me who I am?"

Did Marlowe ever think of suicide? The answer was given by Hamlet himself. Edgar, of course, was faced with the same dilemma. Harry Levin comments: "But Edgar's moral ... redefines patience as the ability to bear one's sufferings, to face and endure them in calm of mind; 'Bear free and patient thoughts.'" These words, put into the mouth of Edgar, must have reflected Marlowe's own philosophy of endurance. He would continue to write plays for as long as he could and not complain of "fortune's blows," preferring to think, in the end, of those who saved his life and of God's ultimate purpose.

Macbeth

This is a play about murder and tyranny as personified by Macbeth and his wife, a happily married couple, who make a deliberate decision to embark on a

bloody course of evil. That is the irony of the play: that a happy couple with great ambitions should choose to fulfill their dreams in a way that would ultimately destroy them.

Marlowe, from early on, had a deep interest in that aspect of human nature which we call the dark side. He eagerly explored it in order to understand it, for he saw it all around him. As a secret agent for Walsingham and the Cecils, he had a front-row seat in plain view of the political intrigues which made heads roll. He knew the history of Northumberland's attempt to gain the crown for the Dudley family. He knew of the struggle between Mary Queen of Scots and Queen Elizabeth for the throne of England. He had written about this great ambition to be king in *Tamburlaine I* (Act 2, Scene 5), in which Tamburlaine rhapsodizes about his restless ambition which would not stop, "Until we reach the ripest fruit of all, That perfect bliss and sole felicity, The sweet fruition of an earthly crown."

Although it is probable that Marlowe drew on more than one source for the history of Macbeth, Sylvan Barnet writes in the Signet Classic edition of the play (p. 136): "Holinshed alone seems to have provided Shakespeare with the raw material of the story of Macbeth." One merely has to read what Holinshed wrote, selections of which are in the Signet edition, to see how the author made changes for the play. Apparently, the changes were more political than literary. The play was performed before King James I and his guest, the King of Denmark, his brother-in-law, at Hampton Court in 1606.

Since King James did not like long plays, it should not surprise us that Macbeth is "abnormally short" (2,477 lines), as the Yale edition notices. Also, in Holinshed's account, Banquo, Macbeth's fellow general, is an accomplice to the murder of King Duncan. But in the play Banquo takes no part in the murder. Why? Because King James was a descendant of Banquo who was considered the father of the Stuart line.

Was *Macbeth* written especially for King James? It probably was, and the author was no doubt paid handsomely for his efforts. No Quarto of the play was ever published. The only text we have is the one published in the First Folio. This is another play that would have been lost had not Blount published it in the Folio.

Another indication that *Macbeth* was written for King James are the witchcraft scenes that dominate the play. James was an expert on witchcraft and demonology and had written a tract on the subject, *Demonologie*, published in 1597. He had become interested in the subject in 1590 when there were witch trials in Scotland at New Berwick. He personally interrogated some of the accused witches and even prescribed their torture. Antonia Fraser writes in her biography of James (pp. 57–58):

> James's interest in the trials led him to send for one or two of the witches, and be fearfully impressed by what he heard: one, Agnes Simpson, was supposed to have repeated to him things he whispered to the Queen on their wedding night, matters which he swore that all the devils in hell could not have discovered.

It was this experience that made James a believer in the power of witchcraft. And, as an expert, he was able to judge the authenticity of what was in the play. Marlowe, as we know, had written one of the most popular plays about demonology, *Dr. Faustus.* James probably saw it.

Macbeth also takes place in Scotland, and many of the names in it were familiar to James: Ross, Lennox, Fife, Glamis, Angus, all of which must have brought to mind memories of the past. Also, in a letter that Thomas Kyd wrote in June 1593 to Sir John Puckering in an effort to clear his name of atheism, he mentions that Marlowe told him that he "wold perswade with men of quallitie to goe unto the King of Scotts whether I heare Roydon is gon." Marlowe would have made that statement in 1591. Was Marlowe then sent by Cecil to the King of Scots on an intelligence mission?

The murder scenes in *Macbeth* have the Marlowe stamp on them. They have a reality that can bring any audience to the edge of their seats. We get a taste of its gore in Lady Macbeth's famous sleepwalking scene (Act 5, Scene 1) in which she mutters: "Out, damned spot! Out, I say!... Hell is murky.... Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?"

Indeed, *Macbeth* has mesmerized audiences for over 400 years, much to the glory of its author.

Antony and Cleopatra

Antony and Cleopatra is a complicated love story in which two highly sophisticated, jaded adults, with heavy political baggage, manage to create romantic electricity on the stage. Antony is the same protagonist who avenged the murder of Julius Caesar by defeating and killing Cassius and Brutus. He is now the most celebrated general in Rome, a member of the Triumvirate that rules the Empire. Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt, who was once mistress to Pompey the Great and also lover of Julius Caesar and bore him a son, has fallen in love with Antony who had come to Egypt seeking support for his campaigns in the east.

Kenneth Muir, in *Shakespeare's Sources,* names Plutarch's Life of Antonius as the main source of the play (p. 201):

> Shakespeare's portrait of his hero is very close to Plutarch's, much closer, indeed, than his Antony in the earlier play. He made use of almost every incident in the later years of Antony's life, except the long, absorbing, but irrelevant account of the Parthian campaign.

Marlowe's genius was in his ability to transform Plutarch's story into a living drama of two passionate adult lovers caught in the political turmoil of their day. But what is even more interesting and confirms our view that Marlowe wrote the play, is what Muir tells us about the Countess of Pembroke:

> There is some evidence that Shakespeare consulted the Countess of Pembroke's translation of Garnier's *Marc Antoine.* The clearest parallel has been pointed out

by Professor J. Dover Wilson. In the Argument, Antony's marriage is described in these terms:

> Who for knitting a straiter bond of amitie between them, had taken to wife *Octavia.*

Agrippa in Shakespeare's play uses a similar phrase in proposing that Antony should marry Octavia.

> To hold you in perpetuall amitie,
> To make you Brothers, and to knit your hearts
> With an un-slipping knot, take *Antony,*
> *Octavia* to his wife.

In a later scene Enobarbus prophecies:

> You shall finde the bande that seems to tye their friendship together, will be the very strangler of their Amity.

The links between the two writers are substantial: knitting-knit, bond-band, amitie, taken to wife *Octavia* — take *Octavia* to his wife.

Equally interesting is what Muir tells us about the influence of Samuel Daniel's work on the author. Daniel, as we know, was the Countess of Pembroke's protégé, who lived in her house at Wilton and was tutor to her son William. He has been identified as the rival poet in the Sonnets. Muir writes (p. 209):

> There is stronger evidence that Shakespeare made use of Daniel's *Cleopatra* and his *Letter to Octavia.* The latter poem, which first appeared in 1599, has an Argument prefixed containing an account of Antony's marriage to Octavia.
>
> For *Antonie* hauving yet vpon him the fetters of *Aegypt,* layd on by the power of a most incomparable beauty, could admit no new Lawes into the state of his affection, or dispose of himselfe, being not himselfe, but as hauing his heart turned Eastward, whither the poynt of his desires, toucht with the strongest allurements that ambition, and a licentious soueraignty could draw a man vnto.
>
> So in the play, Antony exclaims (I.ii.113):
>
> These strong Egyptian Fetters I must breake,
> Or loose my selfe in dotage....
>
> It is probable that Shakespeare had read the early version of *Cleopatra.* There are a number of details common to both plays, which are not to be found in Plutarch.

What does all of this mean? It means that "Shakespeare" was acquainted with both the Countess of Pembroke's translation of Garnier's *Marc Antoine* and also Daniel's *Cleopatra* and *Letter to Octavia.* There is nothing in Shakespeare's biography to suggest that he knew the Countess or Samuel Daniel. Also, we read in A. L. Rowse's *The Annotated Shakespeare* (p. 2007):

> In 1607 Daniel considerably revised his *Cleopatra* in light of Shakespeare's play, trying to make it more dramatic. Earlier he had been influenced by *Richard II* in revising his account in the *Civil Wars,* to which Shakespeare in turn was indebted.

But Muir makes us question Rowse's assumption. He writes (p. 215):

> The evidence that Daniel revised his play after seeing a performance of Shakespeare's is much less conclusive. The date of the latter is not known, and it may have been written after the 1607 edition of Daniel's play.

The inability to establish the exact date that *Antony and Cleopatra* was written makes it impossible to determine for sure which poet was influenced by whom. Although it was never published in Quarto before its publication in the First Folio, the Shakespeare play was apparently entered in the Stationers' Register in May 1608.

A likely theory is that the Countess of Pembroke influenced both Marlowe and Daniel and urged them to write historical dramas in the manner of Garnier. Her translation of *Marc Antoine* was published in 1592. But obviously the Countess, Marlowe, and Daniel had read the original in French well before 1592.

There are other indications that *Antony and Cleopatra* was written by Marlowe. Muir writes (p. 217):

> Finally it may be mentioned that Miss Ethel Seaton has pointed out some curious echoes of the book of *Revelation* in *Antony and Cleopatra*. Some of these are in the scene in which Antony falls on his sword.... A second parallel is to be found in the image of the falling star.... One of Octavius's speeches seems to echo
>
> I will shew thee the damnation of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters, With whom have committed fornication the kings of the earth ...
>
> He hath given his Empire
> Up to a Whore, who now are levying
> The Kings o' th' earth for warre.
>
> Cleopatra's description of Antony in the last scene may likewise be based on another passage from *Revelation*.

And, of course, we find in the play Marlowe's usual fingerprints, Dido and Aeneas. Antony has just been brought the news of Cleopatra's death. He cries out:

I will o'ertake thee, Cleopatra, and Weep for my pardon....
And with our sprightly port make ghosts gaze:
Dido and her Aeneas shall want troops,
And all the haunt be ours.
[4.14. 44–45, 52–54]

He then calls Eros, his attendant, and orders him to kill him. But Eros cannot bear the idea of killing his master, and so Eros kills himself.

There is no record of the play's performance or publication before its appearance in the First Folio. It is believed that the text in the First Folio was derived from an original manuscript copy that Ed Blount was able to obtain. From whom?

An additional source of the play is Sir Thomas North's *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romanes,* published in 1579. This was an English translation of a French translation of the original Greek of Plutarch's Lives. It is obvious that Garnier, the Countess of Pembroke, Samuel Daniel, and Christopher Marlowe were well acquainted with Plutarch's Lives either in the French or English translations. Also, Daniel's sonnet sequence, *Delia, with the complaint of Rosamund,* was published in 1592. Henrietta Bartlett writes (p. 120):

> Shakespeare was much influenced by *Rosamund* and traces of it appear in *Lucrece*, *A Lover's Complaint* and *Romeo and Juliet*. The subjects are of the same nature and are treated in much the same manner. Shakespeare's sonnets also owe a great deal to Daniel, especially to *Delia*, and there are lines in *Twelfth Night* which are an echo of that poem.

That Daniel was the rival poet in *Shake-speares Sonnets* becomes increasingly obvious the more we learn of that small coterie around the Countess of Pembroke, all writing on the same subject of Antony and Cleopatra.

Coriolanus

Coriolanus is a very strange play and for that reason alone it should be attributed to Christopher Marlowe. According to what we know about William Shakespeare, he was too normal, too much the businessman, too pedestrian to have written this unusual play, or any other play in the First Folio. D. A. Traversi, in *An Approach to Shakespeare* (1954) writes (p. 216):

> *Coriolanus* has rarely satisfied the critics. Most of them have found it frigid and have even suggested that Shakespeare's interest flagged in the writing of it; on the other hand, an important minority — including T. S. Eliot and J. Middleton Murray — have been considerably attracted by the play, and have even found an important place for it in the development of their own experience. The only point upon which there seems to be agreement is that *Coriolanus* is difficult and that its artistic quality is peculiar.

And that is because of the character of Coriolanus himself, a strange antisocial character that must have attracted the playwright as a fitting subject for a highly dramatic play. Tucker Brooke, in the Yale edition, writes (p. 158):

> The chief and almost sole source of *Coriolanus*, as Shakespeare's other Roman plays, is North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives*.... About 550 lines of North's prose are woven into the text of *Coriolanus*, and the verbal adherence of the poet to the translator is even closer than it is in the earlier Plutarchian plays of *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*. The two principal characters, Coriolanus and Volumnia, owe most to Plutarch, though Shakespeare has given to each of them distinguishing traits hardly implied by his original.

All of which means that the poet found in Plutarch a gold mine of stories for the stage. And the probable reason he chose to write about Coriolanus is that he found in the story an unrelenting, life-and-death struggle between Caius Martius, later known as Coriolanus, and the common citizens, or plebeians, of Rome, who were often led astray by venal and corrupt demagogues. Marlowe knew how to engage an audience by stating the conflict in the very opening of his play. We see that technique used in the very opening lines of *Coriolanus:*

> *1. Citizen.* Before we proceed any further, hear me speak.
> *All.* Speak, speak.

1. Citizen. You are all resolved rather to die than to famish?
All. Resolved, resolved.
1. Citizen. First, you know Caius Martius is chief enemy to the people.
All. We know 't, we know 't.
1. Citizen. Let us kill him, and we'll have corn at our price. Is 't a verdict?
All. No more talking on 't; let it be done. Away, away!
[1.1. 1–13]

Thus begins the tragic conflict between the stubborn, proud warrior-hero and the plebeians, a conflict that leads to the hero's own destruction. The audience, of course, is totally taken in by the desire to know what comes next.

Caius Martius had been raised by his mother Volumnia to become a fearless, brave soldier for Rome. And he became exactly that. But in the process he acquired an arrogant and superior sense of self, which rankled the common people, for whom he had nothing but contempt. This character flaw is the subject of virtually everything that takes place in the play. Harold Bloom calls Coriolanus "the greatest killing machine in all of Shakespeare." He bemoans the fact that the hero of the play is not another Hamlet, that he is empty, without the least introspection, inwardly barren. "He is so oddly original a character that description of him is very difficult.... Caius Martius himself has very little mind, and no imagination whatsoever." Today, we might call him autistic.

Yet, the playwright does such a superb job of elevating this emotionally crippled warrior to heroic status, that four hundred years later we still read about him.

After returning victoriously from battling the Volsces, Caius Martius is named Coriolanus by the Roman Senate after ransacking Corioli, the main city of the Volsces. The Senate then decides to honor Coriolanus with the high post as Consul. But in order to become Consul, Coriolanus must also get the vote of the people. The tradition was for the candidate to dress himself in modest clothes and permit the common people to examine his wounds. Coriolanus is appalled at the idea. But the people will have it no other way.

And so, Coriolanus puts on the gown of humility and reluctantly conforms to the ancient custom. He gains the approval of the average citizen. But the demagogic tribunes who oppose him manage to get the citizens to change their minds. Coriolanus then quarrels with the tribunes only to antagonize them further. They call him traitor and call for his immediate death. A trial is held and the tribunes sentence Coriolanus to banishment.

Thus, from being honored by the Senate to being called a traitor and banished by the plebeians, Coriolanus's pride has suffered too much. Bursting with the need for revenge, he goes to his hated enemy, Aufidius, leader of the Volsces and offers to help him take Rome.

But at the gates of the city, Coriolanus is met by his mother who pleads with him to spare Rome. He tells her:

Do not bid me
Dismiss my soldiers, or capitulate
Again with Rome's mechanics: tell me not

Wherein I seem unnatural: desire not
To allay my rages and revenges with
Your colder reasons.
[5.3. 81–86]

But Volumnia prevails. She tells her son that if he conquers Rome for the Volsces, he will go down in history as the man who destroyed his own country, and that his name will be reviled. Coriolanus cannot take his mother's total rejection, and he capitulates.

Coriolanus. O, mother, mother!
What have you done? Behold, the heavens do ope,
The gods look down, and this unnatural scene
They laugh at. O my mother! Mother! O!
You have won a happy victory to Rome;
But, for your son, believe it. O believe it,
Most dangerously you have with him prevail'd
If not most mortal to him. But let it come.
[5.3. 182–189]

Here we are reminded of the motto on Marlowe's portrait: "Quod me nutrit, me destruit." That which nourishes me, destroys me.

There is no mother-and-son scene in literature more poignant than this one.

It is not difficult to understand why Coriolanus has his admirers. He is not only a fierce warrior but also a hater of the mob that seeks to destroy its betters. Thus, he had a political instinct that his flawed character was unable to use to his advantage.

As for the composition of the play, it appears to have been written after *Antony and Cleopatra* in 1608 or 1609. There is no evidence that it was ever performed before the Restoration. The first inkling we have that the play existed is found in the licensing of a group of sixteen uncopyrighted plays, entered at the Stationers' Company on November 8, 1623 by Ed Blount and Isaac Jaggard, publishers of the First Folio. The fact that *Coriolanus* had not been copyrighted before 1623 probably indicates that it had not been performed prior to that date. Concerning the First Folio text, Tucker Brooke writes (p. 163):

> The manuscript upon which the Folio text of *Coriolanus* was based appears to have been carefully prepared. The play is accurately divided into acts, though not into scenes, and contains rather full and explicit stage directions.

It is highly probable that the manuscript came directly from Marlowe when Blount was gathering the plays for the First Folio. In any case, he knew it existed and where to find it.

Timon of Athens

Timon of Athens is a very bitter and cynical play, which has troubled critics and scholars of Shakespeare because of its deep pessimism. It is about money,

debt, and hypocritical friendship and how they affect human relations. Since Shakespeare was a prosperous theater shareholder and a contented moneylender, the play is totally out of character with the Stratford man.

The play certainly applies more to Marlowe's life than Shakespeare's. The theme of banishment reminds us of Marlowe's own predicament. Timon's choice of a cave in a wooded area near the seacoast as his new home may actually indicate where Marlowe was living in social exile when he returned to England, after retiring from the Secret Service, in Kent near the seacoast and not too far from Scadbury, Thomas Walsingham's home.

The basic legend of Timon is a very old one. The story of the misanthrope in Plutarch's *Life of Antonius*, and Lucian's comic dialogue, *Timon the Misanthrope*, are most likely the sources of the play.

It is believed that the play was written between 1606 and 1610. Theatrical annals record no performance of the play until the close of the eighteenth century. It was entered in the Stationers' Register on November 8, 1623, along with fifteen other unpublished plays that Ed Blount and Isaac Jaggard intended to include in the First Folio. Where did Blount find a copy of the manuscript? The fact that the play had neither been performed nor published in Quarto before 1623, would clearly indicate that the manuscript came directly from the playwright. Since Shakespeare had died in 1616, the only other possible owner of the original manuscript would have been Marlowe.

All's Well That Ends Well

The Airmont edition of *All's Well That Ends Well*, edited by Beryl Rowland of York University, published in 1968, has a good summary of the play's main plot (p. vii):

> *All's Well That Ends Well* is about a clever girl who, as a reward for healing the King of an apparently incurable disease, gets herself married to an unwilling and profligate young nobleman. Her new husband refuses to sleep with her until she has conceived a child by him, and his impossible condition is fulfilled when, without his knowledge, she substitutes herself for a young woman whom he intends to seduce.

The play was obviously written as light and witty entertainment, with all of the ingredients to titillate an Elizabethan audience: virginity, lust, seduction, love, and humorous dialogue with a Falstaffian scoundrel and braggart named Parolles, who serves the young nobleman in somewhat the same manner that Falstaff served Prince Hal. Yet, throughout the play there are serious and astute philosophical observations, a sure sign that Marlowe wrote it.

The central character, Helena, who cures the King, is virtue personified. Her love for Bertram, the son of the Countess, her foster parent, leads her to unusual feats of theatrical deception, including a faked death.

The playwright undoubtedly got his plot from William Painter's *Palace of*

Pleasure, published in 1566. Scholars have assigned a tentative writing date of 1603–04. Inasmuch as there is no record of a contemporary performance, and that it was first published in the 1623 First Folio, this may be one of the plays that Ed Blount got directly from Marlowe himself. A. L. Rowse writes in *The Annotated Shakespeare* (p. 635): "The text, from the First Folio is a fair one and offers few difficulties. These, however, are fascinating, for they appear to indicate a copy from the author's own manuscript."

Since there is no mention in Shakespeare's will of any plays, including unperformed and unpublished ones, we can assume that this one came from Marlowe.

The play has its notable Marlowisms. In Act I, Scene 3, the Clown, referring to the heroine's name Helena, sings:

> Was this fair face the cause, quoth she,
> Why the Grecians sacked Troy?
> Fond done, done fond,
> Was this King Priam's joy?
> [1.3. 74–77]

Which reminds us of Doctor Faustus who, in awe, utters, upon seeing the beautiful Helen of Troy, "Was this the face that launch'd a thousand ships and burnt the topless towers of Illium?"

Another Marlowe clue is a reference to "Bajazet's mule," in Act 4, Scene I (47). The editor's footnote reads: "Bajazet is the Turkish sultan in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine.*" There are also other clues, such as references to the Bible and Calvinist teachings, which Marlowe knew by heart from his studies at Corpus Christi. The Clown reflects Calvin's doctrine of "innate depravity" when he tells the Countess: "I have been, madam, a wicked creature, as you and all flesh and blood are; and, indeed, I do marry that I may repent" (1.3. 27–28). Was this Marlowe speaking to the Countess of Pembroke?

The Clown, through whom Marlowe speaks, also alludes to the ongoing conflict between Protestants and Catholics when he tells the Countess (Act 1, Scene 3): "If men could be contented to be what they are, there were no fear in marriage; for young Charbon the puritan and old Poysam the papist, howsome'er their hearts are sever'd in religion, their heads are both one, — they may jowl horns together, like any deer i' th' herd" (39–43).

We find another Marlowe clue in Act 4, Scene 3 (45–47) in which we learn that Helena has faked her own death, which is faithfully confirmed by the rector, much like Marlowe's own faked death at Deptford, confirmed by the Coroner's Inquest.

The play is full of Marlowe's philosophical comments, such as his view of Elizabethan modernism, when Lafeu remarks (Act 2, Scene 3):

> They say miracles are past; and we have our philosophical persons, to make modern and familiar, things supernatural and causeless. Hence is it that we make trifles of terrors ensconcing ourselves into seeming knowledge, when we should submit

ourselves to an unknown fear. Why, 'tis the rarest argument of wonder that hath shot out in our latter times.

Do we not still hotly debate these same issues in the twenty-first century?

Pericles, Prince of Tyre

Pericles, Prince of Tyre, was entered in the Stationers' Register in 1608 by Edward Blount, Marlowe's executor, but was neither published by him nor included in the First Folio of 1623. This has led scholars to believe that there was a problem with the play. Nevertheless, it was published a year later, 1609, by Henry Gosson in two Quarto editions. Other editions followed in 1611, 1619, 1630 and 1635. It was finally included in the second printing of the Third Folio of 1664 and the Fourth Folio of 1685.

As for the sources of the play, the story appears to have originated as a pagan Greek romance, which was later translated into Latin. John Gower, an English poet, contemporary with Chaucer, included the story in his *Confessio Amantis,* written about 1390. The fact that Gower is the narrator in *Pericles* and that the play opens with an acknowledgment of him as its literary father, indicates that Gower was indeed the chief source of the play.

But in all of the earlier publications of the story, the hero is known as Apollonius. How did he become Pericles? Alfred R. Bellinger, editor of the Yale edition of the play, provides an important clue (p. 114):

> [I]t seems more likely that the name was suggested by Pyrocles, the hero of the romance, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia written by Philippe Sidnei,* published in 1590. There are other instances of similarity ... which make it probable that Sidney's book was fresh in the playwright's mind.

It would also indicate that Marlowe started writing the play much earlier in his career, while he was still part of the Countess's coterie, and finished it later. The title page of the 1609 quarto reads (in modern spelling):

> The Late, And much admired Play, Called Pericles, Prince of Tyre. With the true Relation of the whole Histories, adventures, and fortunes of the said Prince: As also, The no less strange, and worthy accidents, in the Birth and Life, of his Daughter Mariana. As it hath been divers and sundry times acted by his Majesty's Servants, at the Globe on the Bank-Side. By William Shakespeare. Imprinted at London for Henry Gosson, and are to be sold at the sign of the Sovereign Paternoster row, &c. 1609 [Bartlett, p. 41].

It would seem that the publication of the play and its sale to His Majesty's Servants provided the playwright with the cash needed to maintain himself, and that it was Blount who managed all of this as an agent for his exiled author.

Because of its joyous, happy ending, *Pericles* became a very popular play. But it also has several Marlowe clues. In the jousting scene, where the knights are contending for Thaisa's hand, the fourth knight states his motto as: "Qui me

alit me extinguit," which is a variation of Marlowe's motto "Quod me nutrit me destruit" (2.3. 34). Also, Thaisa's father, the King, questions Pericles:

> *King.* Sir, you are music's master.
> *Pericles.* The worst of all her scholars, my good lord.
> [2.5. 30–31]

Was Marlowe referring to his days at the King's School where students were admitted because of their ability to sing? The conversation continues:

> *King.* Sir, my daughter thinks very well of you;
> Ay, so well that you must be her master.
> And she will be your scholar: therefore look to it.
> *Pericles.* I am unworthy for her schoolmaster.
> *King.* She thinks not so.
> [37–41]

Was Marlowe thinking of the days when he tutored the princess Arbella at the behest of Lord Burghley? There are many questions that will only be answered by continued research. The basic facts about Marlowe's life have been slowly gathered by scholars and biographers. But when we consider that Shakespeare's life has been the subject of thousands if not millions of hours of research by armies of scholars who have come up with nothing related to the man as a professional writer, we wonder what could be uncovered if the same amount of time and effort were made to answer the many questions raised in this book.

Pericles is full of great action, including an attempted murder of Marina by her adoptive father, King Leonine, urged by his Lady Macbeth-like wife Dionyza. After Leonine tells Marina that he is duty-bound to kill her, his plan is interrupted by an attack of pirates who then kidnap Marina. They sell her to a brothel, where she refuses to submit to the owner's pleas to be productive. Marlowe knows how to use suspense to keep his audience guessing as to what will come next.

Cymbeline

There is so much exile, banishment, disguise, mistaken identities, and dirty tricks in *Cymbeline*, that one is tempted to believe that the only author who could possibly have written it must have experienced some of it. Shakespeare's humdrum life as businessman, part theatre owner and actor cannot account for a tenth of what goes on in this complex and chaotic play. The plot is so preposterous that Dr. Johnson wrote of it (Bloom, p. 615):

> To remark the folly of the fiction, the absurdity of the conduct, the confusion of the names, and manners of different times, and the impossibility of the events in any system of life, were to waste criticism upon unresisting imbecility, upon faults too evident for detection, and too gross for aggravation.

Harold Bloom writes (p. 615): "Nothing fits, anything goes in this wild play, where Shakespeare really does seem to let himself range."

Henry N. Hudson, in *Shakespeare: His Life, Art, and Characters,* writes (p. 420):

> In its structure, *Cymbeline* is more complex and involved than any other of the Poet's dramas. It includes no less than four distinct groups of persons, with each its several interests and course of action. First, we have Imogen, Posthumus, Pisanio, and Iachimo, in which group the main interest is centered; then, the King, the Queen, and Prince Cloten, the Queen's shrewd blockhead of a son, who carry on a separate scheme of their own; next, the Imperial representative, Lucius, who comes first as Roman Ambassador to reclaim the neglected tribute, and then as general with an army to enforce it; last, old Belarius and the two lost Princes, who emerge from their hiding-place to bear a leading part in bringing about the catastrophe.

Yet, the playwright manages to pull the whole thing off quite brilliantly. Schlegel called *Cymbeline* "one of Shakespeare's most wonderful compositions." Bloom has a different view, when he says, "You can say of *Cymbeline* that nothing works or that everything does, because the play is a large ellipsis with too much left out." He goes on later to say (p. 635):

> Shakespeare cannot stop himself, in his run-on self-parodies.... Compulsive self-parody does not exist elsewhere in Shakespeare; in *Cymbeline* it passes all bounds. Shakespeare probably cannot stop, or if he will not stop, that hardly alters the critical question: Why is the self-travesty so unrelenting?

It probably had more to do with Marlowe's state of mind at the time than with Shakespeare's. Scholars keep trying to find in the man William Shakespeare what is not there. If we simply recognize that the name Shakespeare is a cover for Marlowe, then we can go to the real source of the unrelenting self-travesty. Bloom seems to put his finger on it when he draws our attention to Act 5, Scene 4, in which Posthumus is put in prison. Alone he speaks:

> Most welcome, bondage! for thou art a way,
> I think, to liberty. Yet am I better
> Than one that's sick o' the gout, since he had rather
> Groan so in perpetuity than be cur'd
> By the sure physician death, who is the key
> To unbar these locks.
> [5.4. 3–8]

It was Marlowe's boss, Lord Burghley, who suffered miserably from the gout. Posthumus then falls asleep and has an elaborate weird dream in which his family appears in a circle around him. In poetic chant they describe what has happened to him. They call for Jupiter to appear, which he does and predicts future happiness for Posthumus. The dream then ends. Posthumus awakes. He says:

> 'Tis still a dream, or else such stuff as madmen
> Tongue and brain not; either both or nothing;

Or senseless speaking, or a speaking such
As sense cannot untie. Be what it is,
The action of my life is like it, which
I'll keep, if but for sympathy.
[5.4. 146–151]

Sigmund Freud could not have said it better! Was Marlowe, under the pressures of his strange life, becoming schizophrenic? Was he taking the kind of drugs that the Bacon brothers were addicted to? Bloom writes (p. 636):

> Through Posthumus, I hear Shakespeare observing that the action of our lives is lived for us, and that the desperate best we can do is to accept ("keep") what happens as if we performed it, if but for ironic sympathy with ourselves. It is another of those uncanny recognitions in which Shakespeare is already beyond Nietzsche.

The businessman William Shakespeare was hardly the type to go beyond Nietzsche. We can only find the answer in Marlowe. Did Marlowe suffer depression when writing these last plays? Or had he taken one of those strange Elizabethan hallucinatory medications to cure some ailment? Questions that beg to be answered.

The final scene of the play is the reconciliation scene to end all reconciliation scenes. It begins with the announcement that the wicked queen is dead. King Cymbeline is told that the Queen confessed that she never loved him and married him to advance her son. Imogen and Posthumus are reconciled but not before he knocks her down. They are also reconciled with the King. Iachimo describes his villainy, admits his dirty tricks and repents. The King's abducted sons are revealed for who they really are, and their abductor, Belarius, is forgiven by the King, who exclaims, "Thou art my brother; so we'll hold ever." And Cymbeline is reconciled with Rome.

Are there any Marlowe clues in the play? We find out through Iachimo that Imogen had been reading the story of Tereus in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* before she fell asleep (2.3. 43–46). That is the very same book that Lavinia referred to in *Titus Andronicus* in order to reveal what had been done to her (Act 4, Scene 1):

Titus. Lucius, what book is that she tosseth so?
Boy. Grandsire, 'tis Ovid's Metamorphoses; My mother gave it me.
Marcus. For love of her that's gone,
Perhaps, she cull'd it from the rest.
Titus. Soft! So busily she turns the leaves! Help her.
What would she find? Lavinia, shall I read?
This is the tragic tale of Philomel.
And treats of Tereus' treason and his rape;
And rape, I fear, was root of thine annoy.
[41–49]

Many Shakespearean scholars believe that *Titus Andronicus* was written by Marlowe. Is it not interesting that Imogen should have been reading the very same story about Philomel in the very same book that mute Lavinia showed her

father? And in Act 3, Scene 4 (61), Imogen refers to "false Aeneas," a reference to the story of Dido, the subject of Marlowe's earliest play, of which we find references throughout the plays in the First Folio. In addition, Marlowe referred to the tale of Philomel in his dedication of Watson's *Amintae Gaudia* to the Countess of Pembroke.

Cymbeline is one of the twenty plays that saw its first publication in the First Folio. As for sources, elements of the complex plot were taken from Holinshed, early French romances, and Bocaccio's novels. The French romances had to be read in French, and Bocaccio had to be read in Italian. Marlowe could read both. Only King Cymbeline was historically real. All the other characters were fabrications of the playwright.

The Winter's Tale

The Winter's Tale is a play based on a novel, *Pandosto*, by Marlowe's old belated friend Robert Greene who died in 1592. Greene, born in 1558, was six years Marlowe's senior. He attended St. John's College at Cambridge from 1575 to 1578. He is best remembered for his diatribe, *A Groatsworth of Wit bought with a Million of Repentence*, written during his final illness and edited and published by Henry Chettle. Orthodox scholars assume he was referring to Shakespeare when he wrote of "an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers ... and in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in the country." Greene was actually referring to Edward Alleyn, the famous actor, who was the great Shake-scene of the time and was hated by Greene. In 1592, William Shakespeare was a complete unknown. Frederick E. Pierce, editor of the Yale edition of the play, writes (p. 128):

> The novel—or novelette, for it can be read in an hour—from which Shakespeare drew most of the plot of his *Winter's Tale* was *Pandosto: the Triumph of Time* ... which first appeared in 1588 and was a "best-seller" for years before Shakespeare dramatized it.

In other words, the playwright took a friend's inferior novel and, after making considerable improvements, turned it into a successful play that has survived four centuries. It was first staged in the Spring of 1611. It seems to have become a favorite at King James's court. No Quarto editions of it exist, and apparently its first appearance in print was in the First Folio of 1623.

The play is fast moving, with an easy-to-follow plot, without the cross-weaving of several subsidiary plots as in *Cymbeline*. At the opening we are told that Leontes, King of Sicily, and Polixenes, King of Bohemia, were raised together as children and have become close lifelong friends. Prolixenes has been on an extended visit to Sicily and now is anxious to return home. But Leontes urges him to stay a week longer. Polixenes protests that he must leave. Leontes then asks his wife, Hermione, to use her powers to persuade her husband's friend to stay. The Bohemian king finally gives in and agrees to stay another week.

But when Leontes sees his wife, acting the good hostess, go off with Polixenes to make sure that he is well entertained, Leontes begins to suspect that the two are having an affair. His paranoid nature quickly erupts into raving sexual jealousy bordering on the psychotic. He orders his loyal adviser, Camillo, to poison Polixenes. But Camillo is too moral to carry out the order and urges Polixenes to leave Sicily immediately. Polixenes persuades Camillo to go with him to the awaiting ships, and the two leave together.

When Leontes learns that Polixenes and Camillo have set sail for Bohemia, he is furious. He confronts Hermione, calls her an adulteress and orders her to prison.

Meanwhile, after twenty-three days in prison Hermione gives birth prematurely to a little daughter. Paulina, the Queen's lady, insists that the King be made aware of the new-born child, and when she does, Leontes calls it a bastard, "the issue of Polixenes," and orders Paulina's husband, Antigonus, to get rid of it.

Antigonus swears to do so, and departs with the child.

Leontes orders that Hermione be tried for adultery and conspiracy. He has already sent emissaries to Delphos to get a sealed oracle. When they return, the trial begins. Hermione defends herself eloquently. When the sealed Oracle of Delphi is opened and read, it states:

> Hermione is chaste; Polixenes blameless; Camillo a true subject; Leontes a jealous tyrant; his innocent babe truly begotten; and the king shall live without an heir if that which is lost be not found.

But Leontes rejects the Oracle as false. Just then a servant enters and informs the King that his son is dead. Hermione swoons and Leontes orders her to be carried out and tended to. He has a sudden change of heart and begs Apollo for forgiveness.

Paulina then enters and tells the King that the Queen is dead. Leontes is overwhelmed with guilt and grief.

Meanwhile, Antigonus and the new-born infant have landed on the coast of Bohemia. (Scholars have noted that the author got his geography wrong.) The infant is named Perdita, the lost one. He lays down the infant with a bundle and leaves. Antigonus is then killed by a bear. A shepherd, looking for some lost sheep, finds the infant with the bundle and brings them home. The bundle is full of gold.

Sixteen years pass and Perdita is now a beautiful young lady. She is being courted by Florizel, the King's son, but without the King's knowledge.

> *Polixenes.* I have this intelligence, that he is seldom from the house of a most homely shepherd; a man, they say, that from very nothing, and beyond the imagination of his neighbours, is grown into an unspeakable estate [4.2. 41–46].

The King and Camillo decide to go to the shepherd's house in disguise to see what Florizel has been up to.

Meanwhile, the author introduces a new character in the play, Autolycus,

who, in the words of Kenneth Muir, "might have stepped out of any of the pamphlets by Greene or Dekker, exposing the iniquities of the criminal."

Greene had indeed written pamphlets on cony-catching and described in detail how pick pockets and cut-purses would use ballad singing as a means of drawing a crowd and then announce that someone had lost his purse, so that the bystanders would put their hands exactly where their purses were.

The King and Camillo arrive at the shepherd's house just as a sheep-shearing feast is about to take place. Marlowe may have gotten the idea of a sheep-shearing feast after a visit to the Countess of Pembroke's vast estate at Wilton which was known as a sheep farm.

Polixenes, in diguise, then engages his son in friendly conversation. When the subject turns to the young man's love for Perdita, he tells his father that were he to become the most imperial of monarchs, he would not prize the position without Perdita's love. The King in anger removes his disguise, denounces his son and tells him that unless he give up Perdita he will be barred from succession. He then warns the shepherd not to let his son enter that house or else face the punishment of death.

To sum up the rest of the story, Perdita and Florizel sail to Sicily where he tells Leontes that he has been sent by his father with greetings. Leontes is struck by Florizel's resemblance to his father and the beauty of the princess, whom he calls a goddess. Later it is revealed that Perdita is the King's long lost daughter. Perdita then asks to see the statue of her mother kept in a chapel in Paulina's house. Meanwhile, Polixenes and Camillo have come to Sicily to take part in the grand reconciliation.

In Act 5, Scene 3, Leontes, Polixenes, Florizel, Perdita, Camillo, Paulina and attendants all enter the Chapel in Paulina's house. When Paulina draws back a curtain and reveals the statue of Hermione, Leontes remarks that when Hermione died sixteen years before, she was "not so much wrinkled; nothing So aged as this seems" (27–28).

The life-like statue begins to move, and to the amazement of all, Paulina orders the statue to descend. And she does. Leontes embraces her. "O! she's warm," he exclaims (110). Paulina then tells Perdita to kneel before her mother and ask for her blessing. Hermione then thanks Paulina for preserving her all these years so that one day she might see her daughter again.

And so, we have another faked death and resurrection. Like Marlowe, Hermione was reported dead, but then lived in hiding—for sixteen years. But unlike Hermione, Marlowe was never resurrected. He may have dreamed of being resurrected as a great playwright, but that was not to be. By 1623, there were still too many people whose lives depended on the maintenance of the story that Marlowe had died. Robert Cecil had died in 1612, but Thomas Walsingham, Ed Blount, and Marlowe were still alive. Shakespeare had died seven years earlier in 1616. But someone's name had to be put on the First Folio, and Shakespeare's name made sense since he had already been associated with some of the plays and was used by Blount to get the plays staged. Marlowe may have wished

the same kind of resurrection he gave to some of his characters, but it was not to be.

Of course, the publishers of the First Folio had no idea what would be made of the authorship problem in the years to come once it was discovered that the actor-businessman could not have written the plays. But their aim was to preserve these masterpieces for future generations, and Marlowe put enough clues in the plays so that any enterprising literary detective would be able to figure out the truth some day. Were Marlowe ever to be "resurrected" it would have to take place long after he had been truly dead.

The Tempest

Few of the plays attributed to Shakespeare have been as difficult to analyze as *The Tempest*. It is considered the poet's last play, and therefore a kind of swan song. Of its source, Robert Langbaum, editor of the Signet edition, writes (p. 125):

> There is no known source for the plot of *The Tempest*. As far as we know, *The Tempest* and *Love's Labor's Lost* are Shakespeare's two original plots.... The names of many of the characters probably derive from Thomas' *History of Italy* (1549), and the name "Setebos" derives from Robert Eden's *History of Travaile* (1577), which mentions the "great devill Setebos" worshipped by the Patagonians. Shakespeare paraphrases a passage from John Florio's translation (1603) of Montaigne's essay on the American Indians, "Of the Caniballes" ... and he paraphrases a speech of the witch Medea in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*—using Arthur Golding's translation (1567), which he apparently checked against the Latin original.

The idea of a ship damaged in a storm and taking shelter off a tropical island was probably suggested by Sylvester Jourdain's *A Discovery of the Barmudas*, published in 1610. The island manages to feed and sustain the survivors until they can repair their ship and continue to Virginia.

Harold Bloom confesses to being puzzled by certain aspects of the play. He writes (p. 662):

> The play is fundamentally plotless; ... It is a wildly experimental stage comedy, prompted ultimately, I suspect, by Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*. Prospero, Shakespeare's magus, carries a name that is the Italian translation of Faustus, which is the Latin cognomen ("the favored one") that Simon Magus the Gnostic took when he went to Rome. With Ariel, a sprite or angel (the name is Hebrew for "the lion of God"), as his familiar rather than Marlowe's Mephistopheles, Prospero is Shakespeare's anti-Faust, and a final transcending of Marlowe.

Bloom is certainly right in finding an affinity in the play between Shakespeare and Marlowe, although the latter was supposed to have been dead for eighteen years. He writes further (p. 674): "Authority seems to me the play's mysterious preoccupation. I say 'mysterious' because Prospero's authority is unlike anyone else's in Shakespeare." And that's because Prospero *is* Marlowe! Indeed,

if we see the play as having been written by Marlowe, it begins to make sense, for it is Marlowe who speaks through Prospero.

The play opens with a violent tempest and a shipwreck on the coast of an island in the Mediterranean between Tunis and Italy. The island has only three inhabitants: Prospero, his daughter Miranda, and Caliban, their misshapen servant. Prospero and his daughter were exiled from Milan by his brother Antonio, who usurped Prospero's position as Duke of Milan.

Prospero, a very scholarly man, loved his books more than he loved power, and so he let Antonio run the dukedom. Eventually, Antonio, tired of playing second fiddle, sent Prospero and little Miranda into exile on this remote island where they found adequate shelter in a large cave. They found only one human being on the island, Caliban, a savage, the son of the witch Sycorax, who had been exiled from Argier in North Africa to the island and died there leaving her son to fare for himself.

When Prospero found Caliban, he took him into his dwelling, taught him language with Miranda's help, treated him as one of the family until Caliban "didst seek to violate the honor of my child." From then on Caliban would be treated as a servant and slave.

Already we have the beginnings of Marlowe's own situation. He had been living in a state of exile since 1593 and it is possible that he had a daughter living with him. But what is Prospero? He is an author, who creates characters, events, and the world they live in. Miranda knows that her father has these creative powers and tells him:

> If by your art, my dearest father, you have
> Put the wild waters in this roar, allay them....
> O! I have suffered
> With those that I saw suffer: a brave vessel
> Who had no doubt some noble creature in her —
> Dash'd all to pieces....
> *Prospero.* Be collected:
> No more amazement. Tell your piteous heart
> There's no harm done.
> [1.2. 1–2, 5–8, 14–16]

In other words, he had the power to create the tempest, wreck the ship, and save its passengers. And that is the same inventive power Marlowe had since he started writing plays with characters that have become immortal. In a sense, the playwright is the god of his own universe, creating a world of people from his own creative powers, fictional characters who have had as much influence on mankind as historical persons. George Morrison, in his book *Christ in Shakespeare*, understands that power of creation very well. He explains (p. 13):

> It is one mark of a great dramatist that he loses himself in the beings he creates. He does not make them speak; it is rather as if he listened to them speaking. Dickens used to laugh heartily at the comical things Sam Weller said, as though he were hearing them for the first time.

> You can get at Dante or Milton through their poems: you cannot get at Shakespeare. He creates, and then his characters go their way, speaking and acting as they will. They are not marionettes, controlled by strings which are jerked by an external hand; they are free and self-determined beings. The things they say spring from what they are. They betray nothing of what Shakespeare is.

Prospero is helped in his creative labors by Ariel, his creative spirit, whom Prospero sends among his characters, to listen to them and see what they are up to. Although Prospero has created them and put them in place and time, they have their own autonomy. Some are good, some are evil, and they are as real as historical human beings. Who can deny the reality of Hamlet or Othello or Lear or Juliet? Marlowe must have realized that there was something supernatural about his poetic genius. He could write as no one else had ever written or would ever write after him. To have that genius within him was both a great blessing and a curse. And therefore, he had no choice but to write.

Prospero tells Miranda how they were helped in their exile by a noble Neapolitan, Gonzalo:

> Out of his charity ... did give us, with
> Rich garments, linens, stuffs, and necessaries
> Which since have steaded much; so of his gentleness,
> Knowing I lov'd my books, he furnish'd me
> From my own library with volumes that
> I prize above my Dukedom.
> [1.2. 162–168]

The above could easily be seen as an account of how Marlowe was helped in his exile by Blount and Walsingham who also helped him find a comfortable cottage with a garden when he returned to England. There, surrounded by books, he would continue to turn out plays, which were taken to Shakespeare at the Globe theatre.

If anyone truly loved books and needed them for his work, it was Marlowe, who had haunted the booksellers at St. Paul's, where he probably first met Ed Blount, who was to play a crucial role in his life. As for Shakespeare, according to his will, he had no library and no books, not even a Bible.

In Act 2, Scene 1, we find the survivors of the shipwreck discussing their predicament, with most of them bewailing their loss. But Gonzalo, optimistic by nature, sees their preservation as a miracle.

> *Gonzalo.* Here everything advantageous to life.... How lush and lusty the grass looks! How green! ... That our garments being — as they were — drench'd in the sea, hold, notwithstanding, their freshness and glosses, being rather new-dy'd than stain'd with salt water.... Methinks our garments are now as fresh as when we put them on first in Afric, at the marriage of the king's fair daughter Claribel to the King of Tunis.
> *Sebastian.* 'Twas a sweet marriage, and we prosper well in our return.
> *Adrian.* Tunis was never grac'd before with such a paragon to their queen.
> *Gonzalo.* Not since widow Dido's time.

Antonio. Widow? A pox o' that! How came that widow in? Widow Dido!
Sebastian. What if he had said "widower Aeneas" too? Good lord, how you take it!
Adrian. "Widow Dido" said you? You make me study of that. She was of Carthage, not of Tunis.
Gonzalo. This Tunis, sir, was Carthage.
Adrian. Carthage?
Gonzalo. I assure you, Carthage....
Sebastian. Bate, I beseech you, widow Dido.
Antonio. Oh, widow Dido? Ay, widow Dido! [2.1. 49–85, 100–101].

Why all this badinage about Dido? This was Marlowe's code, his way of letting the world know that he wrote this play and all the others in the First Folio.

However, it is in Act 4, Scene 1, that Prospero describes the ethereal nature of what he has created:

> Our revels now are ended: these our actors—
> As I foretold you — were all spirits and
> Are melted into air, into thin air;
> And like the baseless fabric of this vision
> The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
> The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
> Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve
> And like this insubstantial pageant faded
> Leave not a rack behind: we are such stuff
> As dreams are made on, and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep.
>
> [148–158]

In Act 5, Scene 1, Prospero enters wearing his magic robes. An author who can create out of nothing a drama filled with characters, gods and goddesses, fairies and elves, palaces and temples, is indeed a magician. He can even raise the dead. That is the mystery of story telling, of narrative invention, of fictional dialogue. Out of nothing something, very much like Genesis in which God creates the universe and its first humans out of the void and darkness.

Why did Marlowe decide to stop writing plays? Probably because it was extremely hard work, even for a genius. He had been writing plays and poetry nonstop for twenty years since his days at Cambridge. It was time to retire. It is also significant that William Shakespeare also retired from acting at about the same time, 1611.

King Henry VIII

King Henry VIII has all of the hallmarks of a Marlowe play. The conflict between the nobles and Cardinal Wolsey is dramatically stated in the opening scene, the dialogue throughout is brillant, the characters come alive, and the plot moves ahead in a tight, logical way. We know that it was first performed on June 19, 1613 because a cannon used in the play accidentally caused a fire that burned

down the entire Bankside theatre. The text that has come down to us is from the First Folio of 1623.

It is probable that the play was written long before 1613, but was put aside because it dealt with Queen Elizabeth's parents, the divorce of her father from his first wife, Katherine of Aragon, who is treated quite sympathetically by the playwright. Henry's meeting with Anne Boleyn (spelled Bullen in the play) at Cardinal Wolsey's banquet, the secret marriage, the extravagant coronation of the new Queen, and the birth and baptism of Elizabeth, future Queen of England, are important events in this great royal drama.

Another reason why we can believe that the play was written much earlier than its first performance in 1613 is the fact that the playwright had ended his writing career in 1611, when *The Tempest*, his farewell play, was written. Thus, although *Henry VIII* may have been written earlier, it may not have been performed until 1613.

According to R. A. Foakes, editor of the Arden Edition of the play, the marriage of King James's daughter Elizabeth to Prince Frederick, the Elector Palatine of Germany, on February 14, 1613, may have been the occasion for the production of the play, which was probably first performed between February and June of 1613. Concerning the playwright's working methods, Foakes writes (p. xxxvi):

> Many passages in the text give an impression that Shakespeare was reading two or three histories at the same time, and taking ideas from more than one.... In places, the sources were very closely followed, and some speeches are little more than Holinshed or Foxe versified.... Not only did Shakespeare transfer material from one time and person to another, he also amalgamated stories from different sources, or took a phrase or an idea from one source not otherwise followed in the particular context.

In other words, the complexity of the playwright's working style, which combined intensive research with the poetic skills of a literary genius, was beyond anything the actor-businessman Shakespeare was capable of. Writing good plays was hard work, even for a genius. As for the quality of the First Folio text, Foakes writes: "The text is a very good one.... It seems to have been taken from a fair copy, possibly made by a meticulous scribe, of the author's manuscript."

The question then arises: what happened to the original manuscript? Indeed, what happened to all the manuscripts of the thirty-six plays in the First Folio? This is a question that has puzzled Shakespearean scholars for centuries. Since sixteen of the plays in the First Folio had never before been entered in the Stationers' Register or been published, where did Ed Blount find them? And what did he and the Pembroke brothers do with the manuscripts when the Folio was finally published? Were they destroyed or hidden? Shakespeare made no mention of any unpublished manuscripts in his will drawn up shortly before his death in 1616.

Concerning the text, A. L. Rowse writes (p. 1349):

> The text of *Henry VIII*, as it appeared in the Folio, was a tidy one, with many more detailed stage-directions than usual, consistent with the dramatist being retired in the country and giving full instructions for production.

It wasn't as if Shakespeare, in retirement in Stratford, could lift up the phone and tell his colleagues in London how the play should be staged. It was probably Marlowe who provided the play with its detailed stage-directions for production in 1613, and then further helped prepare the text for publication in 1623. And it was probably Ed Blount who was the go-between in all of these activities.

The play ends with the Archbishop Cranmer officiating at the baptism of the newly born Princess Elizabeth and predicting that she will become the greatest monarch in England's history. Of course, Elizabeth had to wait until the death of her sister Mary who, as the Catholic Queen, burned Cranmer at the stake, before she could ascend the throne and establish the dominance of the Protestant Church of England.

Harold Bloom makes an interesting observation in his essay on *Henry VIII* (p. 691):

> I cannot solve the puzzle of *Henry VIII*, and I have trouble responding to the rapture and exultation of Cranmer's concluding prophecy concerning the infant Elizabeth. Dead at fifty-two, Shakespeare never experienced old age, and yet the style of old age dominates *Henry VIII*.

Shakespeare may have not experienced old age, but we have every reason to believe that Marlowe did. The text that has come down to us was first published in 1623, when Marlowe was 59, which was old in those days. But Marlowe was capable of creating convincing characters of any age: witness King Lear.

38

The Marlowe-Shakespeare Code

After having gone through the thirty-six plays in the First Folio, plus *Pericles,* one can only conclude that Christopher Marlowe did use a special code to indicate his authorship and provide future generations with the clues needed to uncover the truth about his life and works. And it is obvious that the code he used had to be carefully inserted in the plays, lest it might lead to the premature discovery that he continued to live after his reported death at Deptford in May 1593. Such revelation would have been fatal to himself and his protectors. But four hundred years later, it no longer matters.

It was obvious to those in positions to know, that the name William Shakespeare was being used to hide the identity of the true author. But apparently, there was no urgent need in those days to know who the true author was. Certainly that was the case before the publication of the First Folio. During that time, many works were published without authors' names on them. There were no drama critics writing for daily newspapers keeping track of a playwright's evolution. There were no public libraries where a reader might peruse quarto editions of various plays. Before the publication of the First Folio in 1623, the name William Shakespeare appeared only on the unauthorized quartos of nine plays. His name first appeared in print in September 1593, several months after the alleged death of Marlowe, on the dedication page of *Venus and Adonis.* His name was not on the title page. The same is also true for *Lucrece,* published a year later.

From 1594 to 1597 his name appeared nowhere. Then in 1598 it appeared on the title page of a quarto of *Love's Labour's Lost* as "Newly corrected and augmented by W. Shakespere." In that same year, a 600-page volume entitled *Palladis Tamia* was published in which the author, Francis Meres, credited Shakespeare with having written twelve plays and revealed the existence of his "sugar'd sonnets" being circulated among his friends.

How many people read Meres' *Palladis Tamia?* It was a large book containing anecdotes and quotations under a hundred or more different categories. It also mentions every English poet of the time. Therefore, it was probably read

by every poet mentioned in the book, a rather small circle of literary men, each one struggling to further his own career as a writer.

By 1598, therefore, Christopher Marlowe was long forgotten and there was no suspicion that he was still alive, living and writing under a different name. Therefore, he felt safe in inserting his clues where they would be passed over as normal text, particularly if the reader or playgoer was not familiar with his early works. It should also be noted that writers were producing hundreds of plays that were being staged daily by theaters that needed new plays as badly as today's cinemas need new movies. They didn't have time to wonder about who was writing the plays under the name William Shakespeare. Bernard Beckerman writes in *Shakespeare at the Globe,* 1962 (p. 8):

> In the total winter season from August 25, 1595, through February 28, 1596, of which we have considered four weeks, the company gave one hundred and fifty performances of thirty different plays. Eighty-seven performances, or 58 per cent of the total, were of the fourteen new plays produced that season. Five performances, 3.3 per cent, were of one play, *The Jew of Malta,* revived that season.... Only twelve performances, 8 per cent, were of the seven plays which were more than a year old. This distribution, which is similar for all seasons covered by Henslowe's records, emphasizes how dependent the company was on the continuous addition of new plays to its stock in order to maintain itself in London.
>
> The sheer volume of production is staggering. How strenuous the demands must have been upon the actors! ... In the three-year period from June 5, 1594, to July 28, 1597, a leading actor of the Lord Admiral's company, such as Edward Alleyn or Thomas Downton, had to secure and retain command of about seventy-one different roles, of which number fifty-two or fifty-three were newly learned....
>
> Although the names of a large number of playwrights appear in Henslowe's records, most of the new plays performed by the Admiral's men came from the pens of less than a dozen men.

Obviously, poets and playwrights writing for the theater, actors and producers staging so many new plays had no time to think about who wrote what under Shakespeare's name. And by the time the First Folio was published in 1623, virtually everyone who had known Marlowe was dead, including William Shakespeare. But the most important individuals—Edward Blount, Sir Thomas Walsingham, the Pembroke brothers—were still alive.

What we have uncovered in our review of the plays in the First Folio is the code that Marlowe used to indicate his authorship. And you have to have read Marlowe's works to be able to detect the code, which consists mainly of references to the plays and poems published under his own name.

Marlowe also inserted biographical data which would go undetected by a reader unfamiliar with the poet's life: for example, in *Julius Caesar,* the character of the cobbler was modeled after his own father; in *Henry V,* Henry celebrates his victory on St. Crispin's day, St. Crispin being the patron saint of cobblers, another tribute by Marlowe to his father; in *King Lear* the way to Dover and the staggering view from the cliffs was based on Marlowe's own childhood

experiences when he and his mother walked or rode from Canterbury to Dover to visit his mother's relatives; also the mention of the Catholic Seminary at Rheims in *The Taming of the Shrew* refers to the spy mission he was sent on by Walsingham and Burghley; in *Measure for Measure* we have a body-switching scene much like what must have taken place at Deptford; and in *Romeo and Juliet* there is a duel scene that reminds us of the actual fight in which Watson saved Marlowe's life by slaying Bradley. And it may be in commemoration of that incident that Marlowe put the name of Watson (TWATSO) in the first letters of lines 4–9 in Sonnet 76.

It should be noted that *Julius Caesar*, *Measure for Measure*, and *The Taming of the Shrew* were not even in print until 1623 so that their hidden clues would not have been known to anyone before that time.

The most frequently used code word by Marlowe was "Dido," from his earliest play, *Dido: Queen of Carthage*. We found such references in *Titus Andronicus*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *King John*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Hamlet*, *Cymbeline*, and *The Tempest*.

We found references to *Hero and Leander* in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *As You Like It*, and *Twelfth Night*.

Tamburlaine is referred to in *King Henry IV (Part Two)*, and *All's Well That Ends Well*. Dr. Faustus is directly or indirectly referred to in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Hamlet*, and *Troilus and Cressida*.

Marlowe's motto, found on his portrait, *Quod me nutrit, me destruit* is reiterated in Sonnet 73, *Measure for Measure*, and *Pericles: Prince of Tyre*. His famous dictum from *Hero and Leander*: "Who ever loved, that loved not at first sight?" is either repeated or alluded to in *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Tempest*, and *King Henry VIII*.

The themes of exile and banishment, the use of disguises, faked deaths, and mistaken identities can be found in *Richard II*, *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*, *Measure for Measure*, *King Lear*, *Coriolanus*, *The Winter's Tale*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, and *Cymbeline*.

There are faked deaths and resurrections in *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, and *All's Well that Ends Well*.

Obviously, Marlowe, who was forced to live in exile and banishment and whose death was faked, could write about all of this from experience. He also, no doubt, used disguises to hide his identity. We know that he used the name Thomas Shelton for his translation of *Don Quixote*, which was published by his executor Ed Blount.

Hamlet, the most famous play ever written, is full of Marlowe clues. The same can be said of *As You Like It*. These are just the more obvious examples that we have found in the First Folio plays. A more intense search will no doubt uncover many more such clues.

Another important indication that Marlowe wrote the works attributed to

Shakespeare is the enormous amount of biblical references one finds throughout the plays. Marlowe's education at the King's School and Corpus Christi gave him an intimate knowledge of Holy Scripture, and according to Park Honan's 2005 biography of Marlowe, the poet in his works "refers to biblical passages over a thousand times." And in the works that Marlowe wrote under the name William Shakespeare will be found even more biblical references. Whole books have been written citing these references. Marlowe's father owned a Bible. But Shakespeare, in his will, revealed that he owned not a single book, let alone a Bible.

We have not even mentioned the sources of plays that clearly indicate Marlowe's authorship: *The Winter's Tale* based on a novel by his friend Robert Greene, or *Antony and Cleopatra*, with its Pembroke-Daniel connection.

Another proof that Calvin Hoffman cites confirming Marlowe's authorship of the First Folio plays is the work performed in the late nineteenth century by Dr. Thomas C. Mendenhall, professor at a college that later became Ohio State University. The professor devised a purely mechanical method of determining the writing style of an author by simply counting the letters in each word of that author's published works. With the use of graphs he was able to show that each author had his own peculiar characteristics in the use of words.

Mendenhall hired several women to count the letters in the two million words written by Ben Jonson, John Fletcher, Christopher Marlowe, William Shakespeare, Joseph Addison, and others. One day, a wealthy Boston believer in the Baconian theory engaged Mendenhall to count the letters in the works of Francis Bacon and compare them with the works of Shakespeare. When the counting was completed, the graphs of the two writers revealed no possibility of similitude. However, when Mendenhall analyzed Marlowe's works, he wrote in 1902:

> It was in the counting and plotting of the plays of Christopher Marlowe, however, that something akin to a sensation was produced among those actually engaged in the work. In the characteristic curve of his plays Christopher Marlowe agrees with Shakespeare as well as Shakespeare agrees with himself.

What does all of this do for the average reader, the lover of Shakespeare? It reveals the plays in a new light and explains what has hitherto been inexplicable. The Sonnets begin to make sense. Some of the characters, dialogues, and events in the plays begin to make more sense. What does it do for the biographers and historians of the future? It opens new vistas about the past, and provides an insight into the greatest literary mind in all of human history, who was forced to live and endure his own tragic drama in silence.

There is nothing in all of literature, in all of history, that can match this story. But in the world of Elizabethan England, with its incredible array of personalities involved in a life-and-death religious struggle, the most bizarre conspiracy in all of history could take place.

For over a century, the authorship question has plagued us because of the great doubt that Shakespeare's biography poses. Yet, writers continue to pour

forth biographies of the Avon Bard. Of these biographers, Ron Rosenbaum writes in *The Shakespeare Wars* (p. xi): "at their worst Shakespearean biographers are like cardsharps, piling suspect suppositions upon shaky conjectures into rickety houses of cards." Sir Hugh Trevor-Roper, the eminent British historian has written:

> Of all the immortal geniuses of literature, none is personally as elusive as William Shakespeare. It is exasperating and almost incredible that he should be so. After all, he lived in the full daylight of the English Renaissance, in the well-documented reigns of Queen Elizabeth and King James I.... Since his death, and particularly during the twentieth century, he has been subjected to the greatest battery of organized research that has ever been directed upon a single person. Armies of scholars, formidably equipped, have examined all the documents that could possibly contain at least a mention of Shakespeare's name. One hundredth of this labor applied to one of his insignificant contemporaries would be sufficient to produce a substantial biography. And yet the greatest of all Englishmen, after this tremendous inquisition, still remains so close to a mystery that even his identity can still be doubted.

In other words, the need and yearning to know the truth is what has kept this problem alive for so long. We believe that we have at last found the truth, so that future generations will understand how strange history can be, and how the author of the greatest plays ever written suffered a fate even stranger than those of his own heroes.

Irwin Leigh Matus, in his 1994 book, *Shakespeare in fact*, wrote (p. 10):

> I will confess that my most memorable evening of theater was at an off-Broadway production of Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus*. I must agree with my dear friend, Roy Kendall, that if this play had Shakespeare's name on it, it would be one of the most performed of classical dramas.

Thus, the whole issue of "what's in a name?" is at the center of the authorship problem. And that is why the great plays that bear Marlowe's name are hardly performed today. Was Marlowe thinking of his own predicament when he wrote, "A rose by any other name is still a rose"? Had he resigned himself to "Che sera sera"?

And thus, while the name of Christopher Marlowe is hardly known today, even among university students, we have no doubt that the "Muse's Darling" wrote the works that fall under the name of William Shakespeare.

It is the fate of great genius to suffer at the hands of society. Mozart died in poverty and was buried in an unmarked grave. Marlowe lived in the prison of perpetual exile and yet produced the greatest plays ever written. We owe it to future generations to restore him as the greatest literary genius that England has ever produced.

39

A Summing Up

The year 2001 saw the publication of Diana Price's exhaustive study, *Shakespeare's Unorthodox Biography.* In it, the author examined all of the documents related to the Bard of Avon unearthed by literary scholars during the past 300 years, and came to the conclusion that William Shakespeare, also known as William Shakspere, was not a writer. "These documents," wrote Price, "account for the activities of an actor, a theatre shareholder, a businessman, a moneylender, a property holder, a litigant, and a man with a family, but they do not account for his presumed life as a professional writer."

In contrast to Price's picture of Shakespeare based on documentary evidence, we have Caroline Spurgeon's very different view of the poet-playwright. In her book, *Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us,* published in 1935, Spurgeon came to the conclusion that the author is "in many ways in character what one can only describe as Christ-like, that is, gentle, kindly, honest, brave and true, with deep understanding and quick sympathy for all living things."

Obviously, we are faced with two very different people: Price's actor-businessman and Spurgeon's Christ-like poet, who resembles Christopher Marlowe far more than he does Shakespeare. Indeed, neither Francis Bacon nor the Earl of Oxford could be considered "Christ-like."

Of course, Diana Price was not the first scholar to do a book-length study of Shakespeare's life and conclude that he was not the author of the works attributed to him. Probably the most incisive and urbane book of that genre was *The Shakespeare Problem Restated* by George G. Greenwood, Member of Parliament, "of the Middle Temple, Barrister-at-Law, sometime scholar of Trinity College, Cambridge," published in 1908. It was in that book that Greenwood made the distinction between the actor-businessman from Stratford, who signed his name William Shakspere, and the name William Shakespeare used as a *nom de plume* for the true author of the works. On Thomas Thorpe's edition of the Sonnets, the name is hyphenated as "Shake-speare."

Considering that there is no documentary evidence of Shakspere's educa-

tion, Greenwood found it impossible to believe that works of so great a genius could suddenly emerge from this Stratford actor. He wrote (p. 66):

> If *Venus and Adonis* is an extraordinary poem, so also is *Love's Labour's Lost* an extraordinary play.... But besides containing some beautiful poetry, it coruscates with ingenious wit, and is full of quips and quiddities, quibbling, repartee, and word-play. Its author must have been not only a man of high intellectual culture, but one who was intimately acquainted with the ways of the Court, and the fashionable society of his time, as also with contemporary foreign politics.... The names of the chief characters are drawn from the leaders in the civil war in France, which was in progress between 1589 and 1594, and was anxiously watched by the English public.

Of course, Marlowe had written about that war in *The Massacre at Paris.* In sum, Greenwood completely demolished the Shakespeare legend, however, without offering an alternative candidate for authorship. Nevertheless, he believed that Marlowe wrote some of the earlier plays attributed to Shakespeare. He states (p. 156):

> Malone asserts (and gives arguments in proof) that "there are certainly very good grounds for believing that the First Part of the Contention of the Two Houses of York and Lancaster, etc., and The True Tragedie of Richarde Duke of Yorke were written by the author or authors of the old King John printed in 1591." He at first thought that Greene and Peele (both University men, it may be remembered) were the joint authors of the two old quarto plays, or that Greene was the author of one and Peele the other. Subsequently, however, he came to the conclusion that Marlowe was the author of King John.

One hundred years later, we can state that Malone's assertions were correct. But the big question has always been, if Shakespeare didn't write the works, who did? The first American to seriously doubt Shakespeare's authorship was Delia Bacon, a brilliant woman who made a successful career as a lecturer on history. Some of her students considered her a genius.

Born in 1811 in Tallmadge, Ohio, Bacon turned her interest to literature in 1852, reading all of Shakespeare and coming to the very unorthodox conclusion that the plays in the First Folio revealed a well-hidden, comprehensive philosophy which could have only been written by several philosophers—including Francis Bacon, Sir Walter Raleigh, and others. She decided to pursue her research and writing in England.

She remained in England five years, corresponding with Emerson, Carlyle, and Hawthorne, spending her last months in sickness and near poverty in Stratford-upon-Avon where she had hoped to be able to open Shakespeare's tomb. She wrote in one of her letters: "The archives of this secret philosophical society are buried somewhere, perhaps in more places than one."

Her obsession with the authorship mystery affected her mind, and she was brought back to the United States in April 1858. The opening chapter of her projected book had been published by Putnam's Monthly in January 1856, but when the book itself was published, it was largely ignored, probably eclipsed by the Civil War. She died in September of 1859.

The next important milestone in pursuit of the true author of Shakespeare's works was a book written by Thomas J. Looney (pronounced Loney), *"Shakespeare" Identified as Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford*, published in 1920. Of this book, Charlton Ogburn wrote in his massive tome, *The Mysterious William Shakespeare* (p. 145):

> Looney did what no one had done before. He approached the quest for the author systematically, and with a completely open mind.... He deduced seventeen characteristics of the author and then set out to comb through the annals of the Elizabethan age to see who would come closest to possessing them.

The man, in Looney's opinion, who fit all of the characteristics was none other than Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford. Looney's work was so impressive that Hamilton Basso, in an article in *The New Yorker* of April 8, 1950, wrote:

> He is an earnest level-headed man who has spent years trying to solve the world's most baffling literary mystery.... If the case were brought to court, it is hard to see how Mr. Looney could lose.

Thus was born the Oxfordian theory, which has spurred the publication of many books and articles on the subject. Among them was *Shakespeare: The Man Behind the Name* by Dorothy Ogburn and Charlton Ogburn, Jr., published in 1962, *The Mysterious William Shakespeare* by Charlton Ogburn in 1984, Joseph Sobran's *Alias Shakespeare*, published in 1997, and Mark Anderson's 2005 thick tome, *"Shakespeare" by Another Name.*

However, the main problem with the Oxford theory are the dates: he was born in 1550 and died in 1604. Diana Price writes (p. 166):

> Ultimately, the Oxfordian attempt to undermine the traditional chronology falls apart because they really offer nothing in its place.... In fact, the Oxfordians offer no chronology at all and the dating of the plays turns out to be an issue in which they prove to be especially, one might say woefully, weak.

The earliest of the First Folio plays is believed to have been written in 1590, when Oxford was 40, and the latest in 1612, eight years after the Earl's death. In fact, thirteen of the plays were written after Oxford's death.

Also, there is no indication that Oxford had the kind of genius found in the plays and poems attributed to the Bard of Avon. Oxford himself was a talented poet, but not a genius. C. S. Lewis said of him: "Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, shows, here and there, a faint talent, but is for the most part undistinguished and verbose." Nor did he leave a legacy of works under his own name that could be considered works of genius. Marlowe did. Not only was Marlowe an extraordinary genius, but the dates fit like a glove.

It was Calvin Hoffman who, in his book *The Murder of the Man Who Was Shakespeare*, first advanced the theory that Marlowe did not die at Deptford as reported. It was published in 1955, and an article in *Esquire* magazine about it caused a bit of a stir. At that time I was editor of The Universal Library,

Grosset & Dunlap's paperback line. It was my job to find interesting books to reprint. One day Calvin Hoffman came to my office in the hope of getting us to reprint his book. I had read several Shakespeare plays in high school and college, but had no knowledge of the authorship problem. I didn't even know that there was such a problem. I assumed like so many other college graduates that Shakespeare's authorship had been solidly established and verified by documentary evidence. But after reading Hoffman's book, I realized that such was not the case. In fact, it was the reading of that book that turned me into a Marlovian.

In this present book, I have carried on where Calvin Hoffman left off. It has not been my aim to disparage the legend that has grown up around Shakespeare's alleged authorship. All of that has been very well done by Delia Bacon, Sir Greenwood, Thomas Looney, the Ogburns, Sobran, Price, and others. My purpose has been to offer an alternative story that provides logical and rational explanations of what took place during the years when the plays and poems were written. It requires changing the way you look at things, and when you do so, "the things you look at change."

If it means believing that an incredible conspiracy took place which has caused the authorship problem, then that is something each lover of Shakespeare's works must contend with. As history has shown, it is easier to believe a credible falsehood than an incredible truth. Yet, one fact we can be certain of is that the thirty-six plays in the First Folio did not write themselves. They were written by a superb literary genius who was also a professional writer. No amateur, no dilettante could have written them. That is why it is important to read the entire Marlowe-Shakespeare canon as one body of work in order to see the continuity between Marlowe's works written before Deptford and those written after. Only one mind could have written them. Although at that time many writers collaborated in writing plays, it was Marlowe's forced isolation that precluded any collaborative effort. And that is why the plays in the First Folio stand out as the miraculous work of an extraordinary genius working alone. And that is why we must know who he was.

Postscript

Is there any evidence of what Marlowe may have been doing after his disappearance from Deptford in 1593? Apparently, there is. It appears that among Anthony Bacon's records at the Lambeth Palace Library is a list of the contents of a chest belonging to one Monsieur Le Doux. Who was Le Doux? It is suspected that he was an English spy posing as a Frenchman. Could he have been Marlowe? A.D. Wraight writes in *Shakespeare New Evidence* (p. 58):

> Here in the Bacon Papers, waiting to be researched, lay papers that had kept their secret for almost exactly four hundred years. They are the historical records relating to an intelligence agent who was introduced to the Earl of Essex as a "French gentleman" with the intriguing name Monsieur Le Doux. The correspondence is accordingly all in French, and in addition to his letters and a number of letters from others relating to him, there was the most exciting discovery of two vitally important documents:
>
> (1) Monsieur Le Doux's personal library listing fifty-six books belonging to him.
>
> (2) A list of the contents of his chest of assignment papers, numbering fifty-two bundles identifying their subject matter and naming the correspondents from whom he had received reports and confidential letters.

While the above was written in 1996, it is now realized that the papers in the chest may not have been Le Doux's after all, but could have been Anthony Bacon's own records with Le Doux's chest being used as a kind of filing cabinet. However, there exist three letters from Monsieur Le Doux to Anthony Bacon, which together with other correspondence indicate the activities of the enigmatic agent from October 1595 to June 1596. Apparently, Marlowe, if he was Monsieur Le Doux, was working under Anthony Bacon, who directed Essex's intelligence service. Both Essex and Lord Burghley and his son Robert were on the Privy Council and undoubtedly shared intelligence information. The documents provide information on Le Doux's activities and movements.

In the Bacon Papers there is a lengthy and detailed memorandum instructing Le Doux on his assignment as an agent. Written in French by Bacon's clerk,

Jacques Petit, it outlines the kind of information about the Princes and politics in Germany and Italy of interest to the Earl of Essex and Elizabeth's government. He is also asked to provide "particular descriptions of each Principality of Italy," with detailed information about fortifications, economy, etc. It is obvious from these instructions that the agent had to be highly intelligent and intellectually curious, a good writer with a good memory.

Le Doux was then provided with passports signed by Essex dated London February 10, 1595/6 and renewed at Richmond on March 10. The Bacon Papers also provide us with an itinerary of Le Doux's movements during this period. In October 1595, Le Doux was in England, and arrangements had been made by Bacon to have the agent stay at the palatial home of the Haringtons, located at Burley-on-the-Hill near Exton in Rutland. The Haringtons were an aristocratic family who were good friends of Anthony's. Sir John Harington, knighted in 1584, had served with the Earl of Leicester in the Netherlands in 1585. While at Burley, Le Doux, accompanied by Jacques Petit, tutored the Haringtons' three-year-old son.

What followed was a raucous Christmas celebration during which the guests were regaled with a performance of *Titus Andronicus*. We wonder who it was who suggested this play as Christmas entertainment. Also, Le Doux became involved with a French Huguenot woman, an ex-nun, who had taken refuge in England and was working for the Haringtons. Petit, in an emotional letter, complained to Bacon about all of this, and by January 1596 Le Doux was back on the Continent carrying out his intelligence instructions. There are three letters from Le Doux to Anthony Bacon during this period. Wraight writes: "As suddenly as he emerges in October 1595 at Burley, just as suddenly he disappears. We lose track of him after his last letter dated 22nd of June 1596 written to Anthony Bacon from Mittelburg," a town in the Netherlands near Flushing.

What is of great interest in all of this are several important things: the list of books purchased by Le Doux, which very much fits the kind of reading Marlowe was engaged in as an agent and as a playwright; and the letters written by hand by Le Doux may be the actual handwriting of Christopher Marlowe. Wraight thought that these specimens of handwriting could be compared to the handwriting on the "Collier Leaf," that surviving page of manuscript from Marlowe's *Massacre at Paris*, which may have been written by Marlowe himself. A reproduction of it is in Wraight's book. But if the "Collier Leaf," as some experts believe, was not written in Marlowe's hand, then comparing the handwritings will be of no significance. It should be noted that the "Collier Leaf" is owned by the Folger Library in Washington.

We owe all of this extraordinary research to Dolly Wraight, who died in 2002, and Peter Farey, the avid Marlovian whose website covers much of this material. What it implies is that Anthony Bacon knew that Marlowe did not die at Deptford and was still working as an intelligence agent for Burghley and son. It also implies that the latter had no objection to Marlowe-Le Doux working for

Essex under Anthony Bacon. Since Essex or Bacon himself was paying for all of this, the Cecils were probably delighted that someone other than themselves were paying for the Queen's intelligence. It should be noted that such expenditures drove Sir Francis Walsingham into virtual bankruptcy.

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